

Mobilizing Love in Literacy Classrooms: Connection, Resistance, and Pedagogy

A Dissertation
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
BY

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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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June 2017

Acknowledgements

I'm grateful for the help and inspiration of many people, including former teachers and students, colleagues, mentors, friends, and family, all of whom continue to teach me about love.

Specific to my doctoral research, I am grateful to the teachers and students who allowed me to spend time in their classrooms, to learn from and with them. They showed up with enormous integrity, grace, humor, intelligence, and vulnerability toward each other and with me.

I would like to thank the members of my dissertation committee: Cynthia Lewis, Timothy Lensmire, Bic Ngo, and Jessica Tierney. I admire each of them for their dedication and scholarship, and I appreciate them as people. I am indebted to Tim for his wide-ranging intellectual curiosity and care, and his willingness to argue with me about my interpretations and ideas. And, it's difficult to put into words how lucky I feel to have had Cynthia as an advisor and mentor, having benefitted from her clear and incisive thinking, and her unflinching honesty. I have unending respect and affection for her.

I am thankful for my colleagues and friends, especially Stephanie Rollag Yoon and Jana LoBello, my writing group, and Tracey Pyscher, such a smart and generous reader, my frequent collaborator, and dear friend.

Finally, I want to express my deep love and gratitude to my family members: my sons Sam and Adlai, and my husband, Henry. I know there were stretches of foggy distraction that made me poor company. Thank you for your love and patience.

Dedication

This thesis project is dedicated to my parents, Tom and Endrene Crampton.

Abstract

That love has something to do with teaching and learning is a claim that finds its way into numerous, overlapping, and contending theoretical frameworks, including arguments from critical, progressive, psychoanalytic, feminist, and post-structural traditions. However, to date there is very little critical empirical research that seeks to better understand and make solid this claim, to link it to everyday classroom actions and interactions. This multi-site critical ethnographic study asks how love is mobilized in an exploration of powerful, sometimes difficult, moments of connection and learning in two English-Social Studies classrooms--one in a large city high school, and the other in a small charter middle school--with teachers who sought to challenge educational inequities through a critical literacy curriculum and critical instructional practices.

Using mediated and critical discourse analysis to examine classroom actions and interactions, the study looks at how students affect and are affected by their social “others” in meaningful and complicated ways. A theory of “cosmopolitan desire” is offered to describe the affective experience of connecting across difference. The study also frames students’ aesthetic and resistant projects as expressions of armed love (Freire, 2006); these demands for self and community are necessary rejections of oppressive and damaging discourses, fueled by the desire to envision a more just social reality. Finally, the study explores practices of pedagogical love, finding instantiations of dialogic (Freire, 1996) and nurturing relationships (Noddings, 2013), as well as demonstrations of radical inclusion and love (Greenstein, 2016; hooks, 2003).

This work has implications for how we might realize and better understand the stakes in the vague schooling goal of “getting along,” bearing in mind the ongoing conundrum in hoping that through public education, “youth [will] accomplish what we haven't been able to accomplish--to establish rich, vibrant, and cooperative interracial relationships, contexts, communities, and projects” (Fine, Weis, & Powell, 1997, p. 248). It also makes plain the scale of a teacher’s labor, and considers how to make academic literacy productions meaningful, and potentially transformative.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

The human is a creature in love.

(Britzman, 2011, p.11)

A radical separateness . . . is very much the core of the American dream of liberty and opportunity for all, of a pure meritocracy, but also the core of exclusion and domination. The modern separate self is a racialized separate self, or more pointedly, a white self. Racial justice is about claiming a shared mutual humanity. It is about interrelationships.

(Powell, 2005, p. 72)

No matter what we might like to think, education is *not* sheltered or in any way distinct from the rest of American life: it is as multiple, enormous, beautiful, and unfair as every other aspect of our society. Along with 50 million students (and three million teachers), our hopes, and our worst injustices attend schools each day, too, and are arguably intensified and enlarged in the confines of a classroom or a cafeteria. This is not news to most students or teachers, although teachers tend to believe, incongruously, in the narrative that education is or can be the great equalizer. We have to believe this, because if education is useless in fighting the “exclusion and domination” Powell described, what are we doing? And I say “we,” because I am right there, too, wanting to believe the optimistic narrative: that there is such a thing as change, because I have caught glimpses of and participated in, however briefly, inclusive educational experiences that seem, from my perspective--as a teacher, a white person, a woman, a middle-aged member of the middle class (from the Midwest, no less)--to claim a “shared

mutual humanity” (Powell, 2005, p. 72). For this reason, and many others, through conceptualizations of love, I turn to ways that schools and educational practices do chip away at injustice, and how they shape or set up conditions in which we engage in relationship across difference, in hopes of learning something about how they work, and how they might be enlisted to create better futures to rewrite a different democratic dream.

However, I cannot ask of Education: “What’s good?” without always wanting to know at the same time: “What ails thee?” There’s no doubt that something ails education; we continue to hear from both the right and the left the damning narratives of a failed system. The rhetoric on the right has demonstrated interests in the privatization of schools, upholding the myth of meritocracy, and the de-professionalization of teaching to advance commercially produced, “teacher-proof” curricula and tests. The left—and I count myself in this group—impotently decries racial and economic disparities that replicate, faithfully, the system of racial injustice built into the DNA of this country through colonization and slavery, pointing out that far more white students than students of color take calculus and physics, and attend schools with IB and AP classes (the chosen markers of equity in education). Students of color are disproportionately represented in “disabilities” (IDEA) categories, and disproportionately excluded from school for behavioral and truancy infractions, resulting in the maintenance of the school-to-prison pipeline. Behind all of these well-known and increasingly acknowledged and well-documented problems (US Department of Education, 2017) there are so many moments, minutes, days, weeks, months, and years spent in schools that we know, but don’t know,

about, because we tend to know only what we've lived and seen. Everyone has a school story, because all of us are involved in education, in one way or another. We should want to learn the uncomfortable answers to "What ails thee?" not from "Education" as a monolith, but from those who haven't been holding the megaphone, now and ever. And in hearing those answers, we may learn, too, what goodness students find in schools that keeps them showing up, sometimes grudgingly, but sometimes happily, each day, and what keeps teachers coming back to their jobs, and trying to do right by their students, despite the discouraging (and debated) statistics showing high attrition rates for new teachers (Brown, 2015).

The big idea that I keep turning to, over and over, is about as abstract (and therefore potentially meaningless) as it gets: love. Love is the key conceptual structure in my study, and obviously, it is not meaningless to me. It matters deeply to education, and therefore, it affects all of us over the course of our lifetimes; it has much to do with who we are, who we want to be, what we desire to do, and what we actually do. Furthermore, it influences how we connect with people who are undeniably different from us. I come to this work with full acknowledgement that it is anything but narrow and tidy. In seeking to address the unevenness of schooling experiences that cannot help but participate in radical separation, and in exclusion and domination, I want to think about how love might be connected to *what makes school matter* to the people who are most affected by it (students and teachers), both in its difficulty and its grace, in any given classroom, on any given day.

Purpose

This study is an effort to understand how love is linked to what makes school—for students and teachers--matter. That it plays a key role in education is a claim argued across diverse philosophical and conceptual frameworks. In addition to more macro philosophical and theoretical treatments, the argument that love is significant to learning has been made in some--far fewer--empirical studies, including research that considers love at the classroom (micro) level (e.g. Duncan, 2002; Lanas & Zembylas, 2015). There remains a need to articulate love's variety, and its simultaneous capacities for doing good, and for doing damage in schooling. It is inherently multidisciplinary and therefore tricky to categorize, it is both misguided and sometimes transcendent, it is immense, and sometimes so small as not to be noticeable. To think about it in the way that I had experienced it as a researcher, teacher, and student, in this study I wanted to be able to collect more of love, as if I might possibly drag a net along the ocean floor, in order to see more life from the classroom, and bring it close, with the grave understanding that this isn't an acceptable metaphor for ethnographic research. Still, the impulse to see with a wider angle informed my decision to go into different schools, different classrooms, with different teachers and students, and notice what I could about love within the particular cultures of these spaces, to see and describe its actions, and what it made possible, based on observations of interactions, student work, and interviews.

Driving inquiries included:

1. How do students and teachers make meaningful connections with their social others, and what happens as a result?
2. How is love visible in learning settings, and what does it look like?

3. What work does love do, especially for students who have been historically marginalized, made to feel separate, and/or described in sedimented ways in the mass media, and in dominant public discourses (raced, class, gendered, etc.)? What, if anything, changes for students and teachers as a result of an expression or experience of love?

Finally, when I initially began asking questions about what made school matter, I couldn't shake the idea that along with love, the work itself—the work that students do, but also the work and actions of teaching and learning--must be an aesthetic experience. Therefore, my last research question asks about these two strands of significance, love and aesthetics, how they emerge in classrooms, and how they are related:

4. What, if anything, is the relationship between love and aesthetic experiences in classrooms?
- A. What are aesthetic experiences in the classroom?
 - B. How/what can we learn from aesthetic work, the interactions and collaboration while making it, the performance of this work, and the way it is talked about?
 - C. What does it express?

The following section highlights the importance of understanding meritocracy, and how against such a backdrop, teachers and students engage for something different, and much larger than this rationalized discourse.

Background

One key element from the litany of educational woes listed above is the myth of meritocracy, which Powell (2005) equates with the American dream. It's a powerful

myth. The idea behind meritocracy is that those who succeed are doing so based on their smarts, skills, tenacity, chutzpah, “grit,” and so forth. Successful people supposedly have better life chances because they bring a winning combination of work ethic and ability. While believing this story is convenient for those who benefit from the system (usually white, middle and upper income people), there is no shortage of research showing that it is just that, a story, and one that continues to inflict damage on communities with concentrations of students historically marginalized by racial classification and/or poverty (e.g. Moore, 2005). The story of “success” is actually a complicated one about the biases of sorting and labeling, the arbitrariness of cut-scores, and the corruption created by the lure of lucrative testing contracts and related curricular materials (Hursh, 2005; 2014). Since springing up in the 1990s, the current version of meritocracy—one that is different from earlier versions, although not in its impact on our social fabric--the neoliberal “audit culture” (Shore and Wright, 1999), hasn’t gone away, despite loud criticism. So, while I would like to leave it out of the background for this study, I can’t as long as schools, teachers, and students are still pressed to demonstrate evidence of learning through test results. Alternative accountability measures are not widely used, aside from the alternative of simply refusing to participate. White supremacy and capitalism, among other human-made disasters, have led inexorably to the privatization of education--both instruction and management—with no discernible benefit to students (Nussbaum, 2010; Shepard, 2000). The push for accountability has not, after 20 years, changed the state of educational equity in this country, and yet tests are all “we” (the public) know as data or evidence of learning. It remains the chief legible indicator of

intellectual power and promise, and it keeps what is valued about education firmly centered on outcomes that favor the male, straight, white, and wealthy of the world.

Beyond compulsory attendance, then, why do marginalized students who do not benefit from this rigged game continue to attend and engage in school? Of course, they attend because they want to learn, but with so many blockages—structural, historic, interpersonal—I am interested in the notion that students might find connection and belonging, also viewable as love and communion, across significant social difference, with their peers and with their teachers (Britzman, 1998, 2010, 2011; hooks, 2003, 2006). And, in addition to this important relationship-based kind of love, teachers and students may also operate out of a radical love for a more just society (Dewey, 1957, 2011; Freire, 1993; hooks, 2003), a desire for better futures, as yet unknown, but imagined (Garrison, 2010; Greene, 1995). This imagining is, in part, where aesthetic experience comes into the study. As far as the accountability-reform movement is concerned, aesthetic experiences are extras in schools, invited inconsistently, and not reflected in reports of Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) even if they support student success in quantifiable ways (Peppler et al, 2014; President’s Committee, 2011). Aesthetic experiences, defined broadly, infuse most, if not all, satisfying projects we pursue, from recognized artistic endeavors to more mundane activities like Dewey’s example of building a fire (2005). Becoming fully immersed in an act—sensibly, emotionally, intellectually—requires a willingness to engage in a self-imposed speculative process leading to a desired “end-in-view” (Dewey & Tufts, 1908), an imagined, but not entirely known future.

Briefly, then, I have come to see love in terms of two models: one of these is linked to relationships, and the other to a desire for better futures. As a result of my research on love, and through my hours, weeks, and months with students and teachers in the two settings, I have become more certain that aesthetic experiences are examples of love for the self--the building of an expressive and persuasive edifice--and love in the form of desire for something different. In both constructs, love takes shape through actions; it is manifested and discernible in small and large everyday moments.

Research Design

Overview

This critical ethnographic study looked at two racially, economically, ethnically, and linguistically diverse secondary English classrooms in order to see the multiplicity of experience, not with the goal of comparing them. The sites were truly different from each other: one was a critical digital projects classroom in a large city high school, and the other was a global studies class in a small charter middle school founded on principles of critical pedagogy, critical literacy, and feminism. As will be described in more detail in Chapter 3, the participants in the study included the teachers and students in these two sites; both classrooms had teachers who were white women who described themselves as wanting to fight against systems of oppression, especially racial injustice and homophobia, through student talk, critical analysis of dominant discourses, and production of new texts that addressed injustice and imagined different social realities. Aside from interviews, all data were collected as part of the everyday goings-on of the classes, including the experiences of literacy production and performance.

I used interview data along with the things that students were doing, saying, and making, as a means to triangulate and support other findings, but not to initiate them. I didn't, for example, ask anyone to talk about love. Rather, I wanted to learn about what was important, moving, and meaningful to the participants, and find patterns and themes from such moments of text creation and sharing, and person-to-person interaction. After coding the data, I used methods from critical discourse analysis, such as significance building (Gee, 2011) and intertextuality (VanLeeuwen, 2007), plus mediated discourse analysis, such as nexus analysis (Scollon & Scollon, 2004), and included the analysis of timescales, histories/futures of social actors, mediating tools, and multimodal texts (Norris & Jones, 2005).

Rationale and Significance

To say we find ourselves at a moment of serious and justified distrust across social differences—with significant upticks in hate crimes and an upsurge in an ugly kind of protectionist nationalism--is not hyperbolic, and to wish this away in school settings is irresponsible. Talking with diverse others is not and never has been comfortable, and now “the need for civic . . . dialogue in schools has never been more urgent” (Juzwik et al, 2012, p. 8). This study suggests that the risks and rewards of connecting with our social others are profound, and that they are instances of love, humble extensions of radical hospitality. The study also suggests that working with a love-fueled commitment to people, especially those who have been ill served by society, and therefore by schools, helps teachers and students desire and insist on equitable—meaningful-- education. Far from assuming that pedagogical love is benign, the theoretical framework of this study

also considers the ways that harmful actions may be viewed as loving ones, how good intentions might ultimately limit students' ability to be as multiple and complex as they are, and further, might obscure or warp the view of better futures for these students.

This study aims to make a difference in taking the actions of teachers and students seriously, in showing that love, in its lack and its bounty, informs all of these actions. Casting love in a leading role in relationships and in how we learn places value on teacher and student agency; their abilities to maneuver within oppressive systems, to connect, to create, and to stand beside, is needed, because while we are sick to death of inequities at the macro, meso, and micro levels, we seem unable to shed them at all. The study has the potential to contribute to theories of interaction, in analyzing the contact between social others. It also has the goal of influencing practice and/or policy in showing how curriculum design and enactment (through many different styles of teaching, rather than any one "best practice") can lead to thoughtful and connective work that can have far-reaching effects on students' relationships to social power and participation in learning.

Situating the Researcher

Before you decide that I'm a hopeless romantic, I think now is the moment to admit that I am, in fact, biased toward accounts of education that foreground its risks (Biesta, 2013), uncertainties (Kumashiro, 2002, 2009), and impossibilities (Britzman, 2003, 2009). I am far more persuaded by failures (c.f. Lewis, 2014; Marsh, 2014), in general, than by success stories. Throughout my research, I continually kept the difficulties and the glaring problems of teaching and learning close, because these are the hauntings from my own career as a teacher. Memories of things that went wrong, I like to

imagine, stand out because there were many other, often mundane things, that went okay, and truthfully, many things went really well. My fixation on failure is not attributable to false modesty on my part, nor is it pessimism, or perfectionism. It has something to do with my desire to see all sides of an experience at once, to realize that one person's moment of victory might well be another person's moment of humiliation, or perhaps, less dramatically, might have been an experience that simply didn't matter so much to another participant. This is my long way of saying that I didn't and do not come bursting into the field of education to easily and happily declare that love is the answer. I *am* saying that it is there all of the time, like it or not, and it needs to be reckoned with and understood in order to be beneficial, and it truly can be beneficial.

My Background

I am the daughter and granddaughter of teachers and librarians. My dad was a social studies teacher in the Robbinsdale Area School District for over 35 years, and my mom had a degree in library science, although as a mostly stay-at-home mom, volunteering at the school and church library was where she put that degree to work. I was lucky to have her attention and indulgence for my wild cravings to read, listen, and playact my way into all kinds of stories. My grandmothers also liked stories; they both worked at the public library, in Manistee, Michigan, and before getting married, both taught grade school. One of my grandpas was a county agent, but before that he was a coach, teacher, and superintendent of schools in a tiny northern Michigan township.

With all of these teachers and librarians in my family, one thing was certain: teaching was never, ever a career goal for me. I wanted to be the president, or a magician,

a rock collector, or maybe a writer. However, I was given a scholarship to get my teaching credential after realizing that my M.A. in English literature wasn't a golden ticket, and I went for it. It was most definitely a career decision born out of financial necessity, although it answered my desire to do something that I thought was important. I was a believer, because schools worked well for me, being created for the likes of me. Maybe this is why I was never one of those teachers who declared that "I teach because I love kids." I kind of wish I had started with that notion, but it took me a lot longer to figure it out. I started teaching English on the East Side of St. Paul, at a school that had 90% of students in poverty, 90% students of color, and high numbers of first and 1.5 generation immigrant students. After some time, I sought situations where I could job share or work part-time, and I ended up teaching at an orthodox Jewish high school for girls, then at an alternative charter school, and then at an independent grade school. Aside from life experiences getting tangled in my professional path--such as birth of my children, and the death of my mom--I think I was always seeking greater freedom through different models of teaching and learning. After several years at the independent school, I knew I could no longer participate in private education, although I understand that people choose it for diverse and complicated reasons, because I have done so myself. I thought, naively, that going back to school would help me understand and address the inequities in schooling experiences and life chances that I had undoubtedly contributed to, even as I worked to change them. As I began my doctoral studies, I was certain that there was something missing in the way we were thinking about what students and teachers do each day, how they perform school, and why.

A Teaching Love Story

I didn't know I was interested in the idea of love in education until I had been teaching for ten years. That seems strange to me now, as I am increasingly convinced that both theoretically and practically love has a lot to do with how and why we teach and learn. It was in a moment that combined a classroom relationship, in all of its messiness, with the desire for a better future for my student and the world he would help to create, that I saw my commitment to students as having something to do with love.

Fatigue, or, more accurately, despair, with teaching at a volatile charter school led me to think about leaving the teaching profession completely, but I was persuaded, as a stop-gap, to take on a fifth grade class at an independent Waldorf school because their beloved teacher had quit unexpectedly. This group had "lost" two teachers already--three if you count the one who didn't last even one day-- and the turnover was problematic in this setting because teachers and students were supposed to stay together for eight years. The class was rowdy and prided itself on being the "bad" class, difficult to handle. I was not particularly impressed by their badness, but they did display an enormous amount of frenzied, noisy energy that made the work challenging, and mostly, really fun; entranced by their fierceness and quirkiness, I stayed with them for four years.

There was a student who rarely contributed to the commotion. On the days when he made it to school on time, he tried to evade my morning handshake at the door; slipping into the room, he hugged his body to the opposite side of the doorframe, and offered only a sliver of his hand for me to grasp. He talked to me out of the corner of his mouth, looking down and off to one side or the other, eyes darting back and forth. He

found social interactions difficult, and academic tasks equally trying. He did math and a very small amount of writing in enormous print, his pencil pressed hard to make erratically sized letters and numbers that lurched across the page. Although he listened to the stories I told every day, and could sometimes answer questions about them, he didn't elaborate or extend, either verbally or in writing. He didn't read well on his own. He hated singing and acting, disliked art, and wasn't particularly adept at sports. Coaxing work out of him was part of my daily routine, and I often felt that I had failed. One afternoon I was attempting to engage him in some math problems. Because it was fifth grade, I'll imagine the assignment had something to do with fractions. He had completely stalled out, and after another pep talk, I must have said something about *needing to see something on the page* the next time I stopped by his desk. On my next visit, what I saw on the page, instead of common denominators, was a drawing of stick figures labeled with his name and my name. His stick figure was shooting a gun at my stick figure, the bullets marked darkly across the paper in a line of black dashes (more writing than he usually produced, it must be noted). I probably still have the picture somewhere in a box, along with a write-up, a record of a meeting with his parents, and a behavior contract.

To anyone familiar with classrooms, the rage from this anecdote might be recognizable, both coming from the student, and, mixed with sadness and grim determination, coming from me, the teacher. Had I incited his anger with my own thinly disguised aggression in trying to get him to do his work, to get him to obey my instructions? Even a "fun," creative and kind teacher desires her students to deliver in some way, to at least "try." The surprise of such a moment shattered the illusion that I was

somehow miraculously maintaining a mood of freedom and joy for students, while still ensuring they would produce, submit, and demonstrate learning. Though school worked pretty well for most of my students in this fairly privileged setting, it didn't for him. It made him angry.

Years later, this incident stands out not because of the rage, but because it brought to my attention that part of the educator's task might be to love a student when he is behaving in an unlovable way. Certainly I had done this over and over in the past with students, but what made this experience different for me was that I knew that, unless I wanted him to be expelled from the school, we would be together for four more years. In the post-Columbine era, teachers were justifiably careful about any suggestion of gun violence in classrooms, even if the threat was a lame drawing. Indeed, in this liberal independent school setting an expulsion would not have been without precedent. However, my choice was to stay with and salvage that relationship, a task that required deliberately seeing him as unknowable, a mystery, but still worthy of love. In extending my love to him, across our differences, I had to believe that the incident was just that, a thing that happened. The situation was complicated, and the student was angry, but not monstrous.

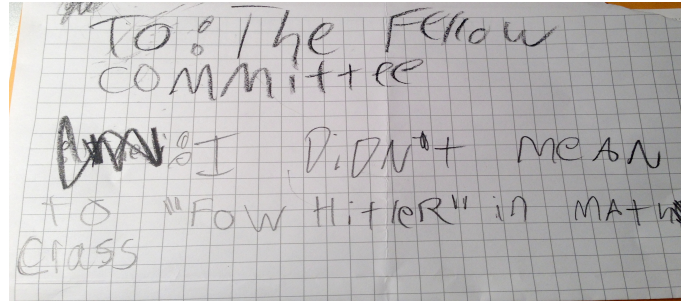
My encounter with this student impressed upon me that while he was truly unknowable, a mystery as vast as the universe, I had to enter into what Buber called an "I—thou" relation with him, and with all students. I needed to think of him not as an experience or object outside of myself, an "it," but as deeply connected to me in our shared humanity. And despite this connection, and despite the fact that he was in my care,

moving on from the “I and it” construction depicted in his drawing required not only forgiveness on my end, but also a willingness to risk, however imperfectly, loving him. This kind of love might appear as a one-way “I and thou” relationship, achieved, as Buber acknowledged, only in moments, with or without the affirmation of being loved back.

There isn’t a triumphant ending to this story; it isn’t a tidy demonstration of how I turned around a kid’s life and in so doing, saved myself. At least, I don’t think that’s what I’m talking about. When the small drama was over, we were still together for four years, during which time we soldiered on. He actually did produce academic work, in his fashion, and we connected well at points—especially on camping trips or any time we weren’t in the classroom--but there were also numerous troubling moments that demonstrated, over and over, that instead of being a progression, education is the continual work of opening to something or someone new, painful though it may be. It might occur in singular moments in time that emerge as bits of loving connection—to an other, or to an idea--only to submerge and disconnect again. There’s no neat staircase that we are all climbing, improving every day as human beings. I include myself in this observation.

It got more complicated, as things often do. The student, who was white, drew attention to his white identity by intentionally saying or performing racist acts. It seemed likely that this was a way of getting a reaction from the rest of the class and most especially, from his teachers. For example, during sixth grade math class, the student apparently stood and saluted, saying his version of “Heil Hitler” (for some reason believing the words to be “How Hitler”). While I didn’t witness this infraction--there was a math teacher in the room, instead--I heard about it later because he gave me a note to

deliver to the discipline committee at the school, inexplicably referred to in his note as the “fellow committee”:



The pattern continued into his next few years at the school. Things might be swimming along for a time, and then the student would produce a racially charged or outright racist statement, demonstration, or incident. I have a note saying “_____ told me: ‘I haven’t told any racist jokes today.’” The note was tucked in my file on this student, as if I simply wanted to remember that he said it, but there is no response attached to it. Yes, the boy was put on numerous behavior plans, and yes, he complied for a while. But I don’t think that I, or any of my colleagues, really knew what to do about him. As a community, we did restorative justice. We practiced nonviolent communication. We spent untold hours engaged in cooperative and quite wonderful (fine, I think they were wonderful) projects, across multiple modes that were experiential, inquiry-based, collaborative, and affirming. You get the idea. I would venture to say that this young, white, early-adolescent, video-game-loving male, sought a “radical separateness” (Powell, 2005, p. 72), rather than wanting to participate in the collective life of the classroom, and that this separateness

didn't really work for him academically or socially. Furthermore, I actually think that in his way, this student loved his (admittedly few) classmates of color. I know that sounds overly generous, but they knew each other well, and spent time at each other's houses. However, while there was some "humorous" banter around racial identities among the male students in the class, his participation was off, even in the context of this joking around.

I can't separate all of these racialized incidents from the other ways that this student talked and interacted and worked. They came along with him and I'll wager they are still there, somewhere; the rage from the stick figure shooting, an intense ambivalence about his whiteness, all were mixed up with a desire to provoke, to get a response from his immediate surroundings. Where is the line? Have I crossed it yet? When he finished 8th grade this student hugged and thanked me, and that was it. I felt that we had achieved, often through humor—a different humor than he engaged in when showing off his racial callousness--a delicate balance between my intrusiveness as his teacher, and his desire to be left alone. The point, or one of the points, is that he got to stay despite all of his explicit aggressions, and all of our fraught difference.

I have since become obsessed with the question: what if every student were afforded the same response of unconditional and specific love or high regard (as it is sometimes referred to) that this child received in this privileged setting? I revisit the incident because it illustrates an oft-repeated teaching/learning dynamic with a fairly mundane but memorable event, one of mutual aggravation and uneasy peace, but also one of a particular kind of pedagogical love. It reminds me that teachers can and do choose to view

each student as good, worthy, and whole, that staying in a deeply interactive relationship is a choice that requires moment-to-moment action. This isn't pabulum, it isn't teaching "because I love kids." Remaining in relationship with students—responding with love, care, belief in their goodness despite evidence to the contrary—requires tremendous energy and work. It is generous, but not for reasons of charity or largesse on the teacher's part, and, I hope, not in ways that would be considered colonizing; it is generous because it leaves open, over and over, the possibility of "shared mutual humanity."

The articulation that love could be a serious part of teaching, as it was in the school's tradition, transformed my thinking. Although it had undoubtedly been present for me subliminally in my work with students in the past, awareness of it as a stated goal made the effort of each day more bearable, more sustainable, and more fulfilling. Education should be bearable, sustainable, and fulfilling for all teachers, but especially, for students.

A few final thoughts come to the surface for me, as I remember this student. One, school and learning itself is a situation that is always emotional, and sadly, it's frequently painful. Nobody likes being told what to do, and schools are pretty much in the business of telling kids what to do, "for their own good." It's a delicate operation, and students can easily feel insulted or humiliated if teachers are unsatisfied. At the exact same time, or perhaps just a few minutes later, school is revealed as beautiful. In the quest to address radical separation, it can be a place for sublime moments. This is because people are infinite, and we come to know parts of their mystery through many, many hours together. We have these opportunities to connect and to work together in really meaningful ways, if

the district, school, community, curriculum, and teacher are all able to take action toward meaning and away from anesthetic and antiseptic exercises that draw students inward, and separate each from the other.

Being/Not being Revolutionary

At the risk of seeming ridiculous, let me say that the true revolutionary is guided by great feelings of love. It is impossible to think of a genuine revolutionary lacking this quality. Perhaps it is one of the great dramas of the leader that he or she must combine a passionate spirit with a cold intelligence and make painful decisions without flinching. Our vanguard revolutionaries must idealize this love of the people, of the most sacred causes, and make it one and indivisible. They cannot descend, with small doses of daily affection, to the level where ordinary people put their love into practice.

(Guevara, 1965)

Because love is an act of courage, not of fear, love is commitment to others. No matter where the oppressed are found, the act of love is commitment to their cause--the cause of liberation. And this commitment, because it is loving, is dialogical. As an act of bravery, love cannot be sentimental, as an act of freedom, it must not serve as a pretext for manipulation. It must generate other acts of freedom, otherwise, it is not love. Only by abolishing the situation of oppression is it possible to restore the love which that situation made impossible. If I do not love the world--if I do not love life--if I do not love people--I cannot enter into dialogue.

(Freire, 1996, p. 70-71)

At a moment when marginalized (through racial identities, through “othering” of all kinds) communities and people are quite reasonably fatigued from futile conversations about race and social justice with and by white people who don’t listen well, I must carefully consider my invocation of the words of Che Guevara and Paulo Freire. As a white woman, a teacher, and a researcher, I have had many advantages, and I would seldom be mistaken, at least on the outside, for a revolutionary, no matter how left-leaning my politics. Here’s what I can say about this. One, I am a dedicated listener, and make that part of my practices in all settings. Two, as a teacher educator, my commitment is to unwhiten the profession through demanding and supporting effective recruitment and retention of teachers of color, with the simultaneous acknowledgement that white women continue to make up over 75% of the teaching force, so there is tremendous risk in assuming they cannot be revolutionaries. Yes, there are many, many teachers who uphold the status quo (Lortie, 2002), those who confidently work against students who are not like them. But some white teachers, and here I must include myself with greater and lesser degrees of success, have labored seriously *with* and *for* marginalized students, working as thinkers, innovators, and resisters. By stating that Guevara’s words of love are important to my thinking, I aim to do more than simply cite him, the equivalent of wearing a t-shirt with his face on it. Instead, I continue to labor to shine a light on what is good, and what ails education, and show how love is recognizably present in both situations, since education is a human endeavor, and, as Britzman said, humans are “creatures in love” (2011, p. 11). To see the love present in teaching and learning is an effort to strike against

racial and other injustices, to salvage and build as real, not as useless dream, our “shared mutual humanity” (Powell, 2005).

Practices of Love: Connection and Resistance in Literacy Classrooms

Following this introduction (Chapter 1), I offer a multi-disciplinary genealogy of love in Chapter 2, with most of the focus placed on love and education. In this discussion, I sort through love in relationships, including ideas about cosmopolitan connections, and the related concepts of care and belonging. The genealogy then moves to love as desire, sometimes conceived of as *eros*, with special consideration of revolutionary, or “armed” love. Chapter 3 provides an overview of the methodology, the two sites, the participants, data collection, analysis, and my position within both classrooms. The next three chapters explore findings from the study, with the following foci: Chapter 4 develops a theory of cosmopolitan desire to describe the experience and effects of students connecting with each other across social difference, Chapter 5 looks at how aesthetic and critical literacy productions of resistance may be viewed as acts of self and community love, as well as richly imagined, emancipatory futures, and Chapter 6 addresses pedagogical love enacted with some similarities and also with many differences between the two teachers. A common theme included a commitment to student freedom. Pedagogical love in the high school was repeatedly described and observed as “showing up” with the whole self, while in the middle school there was a kind of pedagogical love that appeared tender, even familial. The final chapter (Chapter 7) includes implications for thinking about love and learning for teaching and for teacher education, and considers avenues for future research and study.

Chapter 2

Genealogy of Love

“Love is trending at AERA this year” (overheard comment, 2015)

We must dare to acknowledge how little we know of love in both theory and practice.

(hooks, 2000, xxix)

Love is central to being human. We know this not just through lived experience, but we are awash in hundreds of messages about love each day; we have cultural representations from artists, corporations, politicians, revolutionaries, psychologists, cultural critics, philosophers and theologians. The work—“serious” and popular--on love is vast. Love is stupid. It is sublime. It is difficult to contain, conceptually and practically; it resists summarizing and organizing. So it is no surprise that a scholarly exploration of love in the field of education displays similar variety. To date, love isn’t commonly associated with public discourse about education—except possibly in the area of early childhood education--but once I began tracking it as a legitimate concern, I noticed its emergence across epistemological frameworks. Is it really “trending” in educational research? Perhaps. But, if the topic is gaining interest, there are still relatively few published studies about love’s role in education, especially those that endeavor to use classroom experiences as “data.” For this reason, my exploration of existing work on love’s role in educational theory and research relies more heavily on theoretical discussions on the subject.

To enter the task, I initially constrained my focus to a handful of writers and thinkers who have treated love as a “truth” or at least a proposition in education,

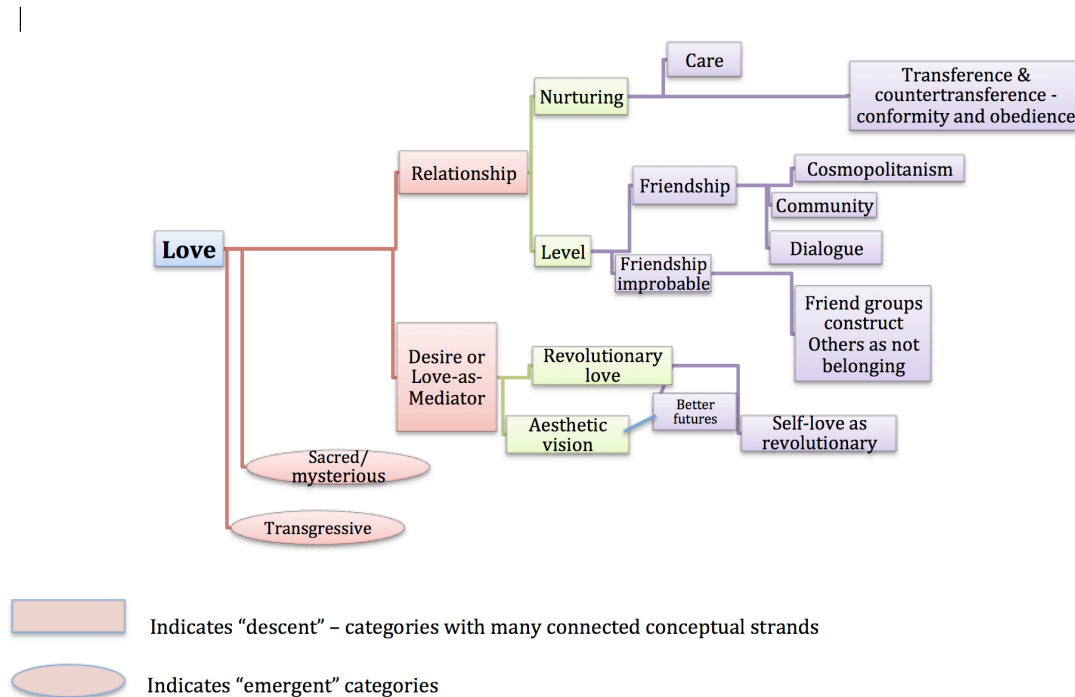
considering three theoretical perspectives: broadly, these were progressivism, critical pedagogy, and psychoanalytic thought. Holding onto the patterns that emerged from this initial exploration, I began scouting beyond these approaches to learn how varieties of feminism, post-colonialism, and political theory might be helpful in thinking about love and education. Finally, looking as well at like terms, such as *belonging* and *care* and *desire* and *passion*, I added to my search the ways that researchers have made prominent the presence and effects of love in educational studies, constructing a panoramic landscape of love, as I see it.

In this selected “field guide,” I offer an incomplete genealogy of love in education, with the caveat that it is as loose as a gesture drawing at some points, and more “gray, meticulous, and patiently documentary” at others (Foucault, 2010, p. 76). The structure of a genealogy is apt for this discussion, in that it imagines the existence of conceptual affiliations, admittedly dispersed, but still linked by shared or at least overlapping histories, as well as conceptual eruptions that reveal moments of emergence, as different ideas burst onto the scene. Foucault’s images for the eruptions are particularly charming here, of a concept arising like a breaching whale, or like a dancer “leap[ing] from the wings to center stage” (2010, p. 84).

Using these helpful organizational notions of (1) affiliations through multiple lines of descent, and (2) emergence or eruption, I simultaneously waded through, and consolidated, how love--and the related ideas of desire, eros, and passion--has been conceptualized and imagined in the complicated activities of teaching and learning. While noticing similarities is fruitful in looking across the frameworks, the wild outliers

are also fruitful, so I hope to resist the temptation to force theoretical convergence where it is neither suggested nor demanded. These conceptualizations are collected in an abbreviated graphic form here (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Organizational Chart of Love



Affiliated Theories of Love with Lines of Linked Descent

From this multiplicity, with theorists and researchers writing in and out of an assortment of frameworks, conceptualizations of love do coalesce around two large models, despite their many differences. This is not to say that they originate from the same source, or that there was a calm progression, or even necessarily a thread connecting them all. Indeed, if I'm honest, what I want to enact is the reverse of a genealogical descent, because in clumping diverse conceptual strains, I'm essentially amassing the very "unstable assemblage" with "faults, fissures, and heterogenous layers"

(2010, p. 82) that Foucault suggested must be disturbed. And yet, because I find these clumpings useful, I will proceed with caution and discuss the two assembled models as affiliated collections of ideas about love in education. The first model is not surprising; it views love expressive of a *relationship*—both between teacher and student, and between and among students. The second model is less familiar, perhaps, to our everyday associations with love, but it, too, has been developed across multiple perspectives. Here love, or more accurately, *desire*, is positioned as a mediator that works to move social actors from an existing situation, context, or identity, to a different one, hopefully enacting some kind of improvement on their current state.

The Relationship Model

The relationship model can be further divided into two overarching types. First, what we might think of a nurturing, kinship love, such as the type of love between parent and child, is recapitulated in the love between teachers and students. Second, there is a kind of non-family, extra-kinship love in peer relationships, the love between friends. These relationships may be sought in certain critical classrooms that strive for level (non-coercive, non-oppressive, problem-solving) teacher-student relationships. Both the nurturing type of love and the more horizontal, dialogic model are indeed social ideals; they might seem so trite or commonplace as to be not worth mentioning, but they are mentioned and dwelt on in educational philosophy and research for some good reasons. The emotional connections between humans in school settings are not easy, and yet, they are often what make students want to learn, and teachers want to teach, so there is every reason to pay attention to them, both theoretically and in practice.

Nurturing Love

It isn't a stretch to imagine relationships between teachers and students as running parallel to the parent-child relationship. This kind of parental love (Aristotle's *storge*) is especially easy to admit within the context of early childhood and early elementary education, but such relationships continue through adolescence and beyond, in much the same way that grown-up children remain practically and emotionally entangled with their parents. Support for this parent-child and teacher-student parallel comes from diverse sources, from the critical pedagogy of Freire (1996) and the developmental, progressive Steiner (1924) urging teachers to love students, to the feminist Noddings' (2013) explicit ethic of care, to the psychoanalytic framework used by Britzman (2011), pointing out that nurturing love brings its own share of trouble to classroom relationships, including ways that love can be unequally distributed across racial difference (Boldt, 2006; Duncan, 2002).

Freire's attitude of love. In his admonition to break from old, oppressive educational relationships, Freire stressed the importance of love in the teacher-student relationship: "How can I be an educator if I do not develop in myself a caring and loving attitude toward the student, which is indispensable on the part of one who is committed to teaching and to the education process itself?" (1996, p. 45). Many have put forth (e.g. Orellana, 2015) this idea—and not just in the sense of "I teach because I love kids"-- but because of Freire's description of revolutionary love, it's worth noting that he also advocated this everyday kind of nurturing love. It is significant that Freire said he could

“develop” this attitude, suggesting that it is both necessary and learnable, that, in fact, loving one’s students may follow the resolve to do so.

Loving warmth. I bring in Steiner’s philosophies of education because it was through working at a Waldorf/Steiner school that I first became awake to the idea that love was part of the work that teachers could and should “do.” The warmth of the teacher-student relationship was key for Steiner, who included himself in the challenge: “Teachers must make love ... the mainspring of our work” (Steiner, 1924, paragraph 13). He repeatedly urged teachers to develop long-term relationships that valued and noticed students as whole, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual beings. For Steiner, the work of teachers was not to develop in students a series of skills, despite the fact that “humanity today has confidence only in mechanical thought” (Steiner, 1924, paragraph 7), but rather to practice the ongoing exercise of nurturing and loving the child. Steiner advised teachers to pay careful attention to students, calling on his version of the child study method for deep observation, as a route to loving knowledge that teachers could practice, and, he thought, achieve. While he called it “spiritual science,” his approach suggested a parent’s intense curiosity and devotion, rather than a scientist’s scrutiny; it relied on his way of understanding people as integrated body, emotion (soul), and spirit beings. In practice, the child study allowed teachers to spend time meditating upon an individual student over a period of several weeks, or longer. Through shared observation, the faculty was to build a collective picture of the student’s physical self, her relationships with others, and her schoolwork and any histories that the family might be willing to share. The study ended with a visualization that was supposed to come from the spirit world.

Steiner imagined the form of the child study to be a “Goethean conversation,” in which conclusions or even analysis were not part of the talk, neither were they recorded in writing, allowing futures to remain open (Steiner, 1996 (1910)).

Ethic of care. Not unlike the attitudes of love advocated by Freire and Steiner, Noddings (2013) developed an ethic of care that was a nurturing relationship between a “one caring” (teacher) and a one “cared-for” (student). Noddings described a “natural” form of caring that exists for parents who feel the “likelihood of eternal love and tenderness” toward their children (Noddings, 2013, p. 130), in contrast to the “ethical” caring that would need maintenance and social support for teachers to develop as professionals whose jobs required caregiving. Ethical care mirrors or even attempts to “restore” the “cherished condition” of natural caring; in other words, it’s a version of idealized parental, recognizably maternal, love. However, unlike Grumet (1988), who positioned teachers as links between the loving, feminine world of home versus the harsh pain of the masculine world, with students toggling between “love and rejection, sustenance and abstinence, nurturance and denial” (1988, xi), Noddings imagined a practical way to bring what was traditionally women’s work of loving care into widespread acceptance as important and meaningful work for all gender identities.

Of interest in this dynamic between the “one-caring” and the “cared-for” is the question it raises about agency and power within the relationship. If, as Derrida suggested, “loving will always be preferable to being loved” (1994, p. 11), then the position of “one caring” is quite a bit more satisfying, potentially, than the position of the student as the “cared for” one. Even loving relationships are necessarily imbalanced; they

can be greedy and colonizing if the “one-caring” feels, even remotely, to be the owner or director of the situation. On the other hand, Noddings’ nurturing love takes responsibility for the structure of schooling relationships, which necessarily casts teachers in the roles authority figures, and, even if authority itself is decentered, they are actually adults in a classroom of youth or children.

Interestingly, Noddings claimed that nurturing care for students entailed a “lateral” move into a receptive mode of “affective engrossment” (2013, p. 34) that sounds something like the flow state described by Csikszentmihalyi (2008): a creative, intellectual, and sensory engagement, in contrast to a tense, clamped-down state of analytic-objectivity. In developing this concept, Noddings repeatedly invoked examples of care between mother and child, such as the way that a mother would not demand an explanation from a baby who cried, but rather, would go to the unhappy child with assurances that it would be all right before trying to address the source of displeasure/discomfort, and without needing to “get inside” of the baby’s mind to correct or even empathize. In just this way, she argued, teachers might meet a student in distress first with a gesture of reassurance, as a parent might say “It’s okay, I’m here” rather than immediately trying to craft an improvement plan. Further, a teacher, as one giving care, would endeavor to attribute a student’s behavior and actions to the “best possible motive consistent with reality” (2013, pgs. 178, 193), implying that teachers would see the full humanity and almost endearing fallibility of their students at even the most difficult moments.

Difficult love. While difficult moments are to be expected, all of the above visions of nurturing relationships conveniently ignore the serious problems that exist within parent-child relationships. Thus, in thinking about the teacher-student relationship correlating to the parent-child relationship, what is to be made of the adult enacting a type of “love” that is coercive, manipulative, and even abusive? Even if you don’t buy it wholesale, psychoanalytic theory helps us peer at the underbelly of pedagogical love.

Psychoanalytic thinking on education links the teacher-student relationship with the analyst-patient relationship and the parent-child relationship. I make no claim to fully represent the enormity of educational research that draws on Freud and his followers, but rather use mostly Britzman (1998, 2009, 2011) as a guide. Britzman reasoned that Freud’s idea of transference across these relationships offered a way to think about why education is emotional, even volatile, and how love--as well as hate—plays a central role in education.

First, learning is connected to a childhood history of wanting love, and fear about its loss. For this reason, learning is painful. Britzman (2011) wrote about this in terms of students in any school, at any time, and also in the specific context of teacher education (2009). Generally, the theory—described by Freud, Klein, Winnicott, and others--about love and loss goes like this. In childhood, before babies understand they are separate from their mothers or caregivers, they cry and their desires are, or are not, met. As they grow, babies come to understand they are separate entities from their mothers, caregivers, or, “love objects”; they are, in fact, subjects on their own, and this is difficult knowledge. In this way, knowledge, development, and subjectivity all are experienced as losses because

they refer back to the possibility, indeed, the reality, that their love object (mother, breast, caregiver, etc.) is separate, and therefore might not come back. Britzman, using Freud's logic, claimed that all new knowledge follows this pattern for learners; it requires the destruction of old truths, which have been comforting or at least comfortable. The idea that learning or development is progressive is thereby debunked; since it is always so painful, education, or new knowledge, is often resisted and/or rejected.

If a threat to love and wholeness is part of a learning situation, then the teacher plays a complicated role as one who actively strives to create change and growth in students. This brings us to the second point about love in education and psychoanalytic thought: the relationships between teachers and students are emotionally complicated in both directions. In thinking about the student experience, Britzman relied on Freud's concept of the transference. Returning to the fact of resistance and pain as facts of learning, we must remember that the teacher who is responsible for initiating the suffering of new knowledge and experience is also responsible for at least some pleasure by standing in the role of the caregiver or some kind of surrogate love object for the student. The student transfers feelings of warmth and love onto the teacher, just as Freud saw that patients transferred love to the analyst. This transference is sort of naturalized and accepted by Britzman (2009, 2011), who referred to Freud's papers on psychoanalytic techniques to support her case. The idea is that students want the love of the teacher, but simultaneously are angry with the teacher for disrupting earlier versions of selfhood and truth. Students hold such conflicts as needing to know and grow, but also desiring to keep things the same (because new knowledge is a loss). This plays out as

students seek to establish and keep the love of the teacher by pleasing the teacher, and being afraid of losing the teacher for somehow failing to please her or him, but also being angry with the teacher for threatening the loss of the love if learning and cooperation are not satisfactory, the very learning that has already been described as painful (2011, p. 75). The twisted logic of transference in teacher-student relationships is what led Britzman to conclude that teaching is an “impossible profession” (2009), based on a rather messy, entangled, and not altruistic love.

While not explicitly discussing education, Berlant (2011) placed the transference in a fairly positive light, suggesting that love acts as a disorganizing force, enticing us to change willingly for the loved one. Thinking of love as “openness to transformation” (p. 684) positions it as something that can radically bring about social change, even if the change hurts. The lover takes a leap, even with the risk twisting his ankle.

Returning to education and Britzman, we must also consider the teacher side of teacher-student relationships through the notion of counter-transference, which at its simplest refers to the feelings that teachers (or analysts, originally) have in response to students (or, patients). These feelings are not limited to responses to the student, but they may also refer to “wild” emotions without clear explanations. “The idea that teaching transfers the teacher's emotional world (including what is unconscious about it) as much as it does [any academic material] may be hard to take sitting down, for it means that, in teaching, each and every aspect of the self, including its most unwanted and unknown parts, is called upon” (Britzman, 2009, locations 1264-1266). This suggestion *is* disturbing; it is unflattering and unprofessional-sounding, if professionalism entails

“rational,” purposeful interactions between teacher and student. This characterization makes it sound as if anything goes, or might accidentally go, in classroom settings.

The counter-transference makes plenty of space for the love that accompanies transference, but also recognizes that one of its counterparts, hate, is often present in the dynamic. This might be Britzman’s way of explaining the “volatility” and “combustibility” (2011, p. 86-87) in the teacher-student relationship, an unpredictable element that arises from the teacher’s spoken or unspoken desire for the student to demonstrate obedience to her or his authority. Britzman saw the inevitability of hate surfacing in the student’s irritation at being asked to submit to the teacher in exchange for love, and in the teacher’s frustration when the student could not or would not fulfill this desire. In trying to see how love and hate function in teacher-student (analyst-patient, parent-child) relationships, Britzman reviewed Winnicott’s extensive argument that hate is often ignored or denied as unnatural, when, in fact, “the child comes to love and hate simultaneously, and to accept the contradiction” (Winnicott, 1964, p. 237), adding that love and hate are difficult to tell apart, that there exists a “certain ruthlessness, an aggression with both the material taught and with our respective uses of it” (2009, locations 1509-1510).

Even with a nurturing approach that assumes a student’s goodness, or “best possible motive” (Noddings, 2013), many factors get in the way of teachers cultivating a sturdy and abiding kind of love for their students. One obvious factor that affects the relationship is that teachers feel pressure to have some control over students, in order to “make them learn.” Britzman warned of the aggression that ensues when obedience is not

offered to the teacher, the hate that students feel when the teacher demands such obedience, or the threat they feel in being asked to give up one way of understanding the world in favor of a new one. Furthermore, teachers trade on the love their students bear them; they are in the business of wooing students away from one understanding of reality to a new one, through the learning process. To do this, they use their love relationship with students as an exchange: do this and I will still love you. Disobey or disappointment me, and I will withhold my love. Yanay (2012) pointed out that those with power—here we will insert “teachers”—might show “tolerance” toward their students unless the illusion of love, in the form of compliance, is disrupted by resistance. The “ruler” wishes to believe that he or she is loved and good, but if the fantasy is shattered then the tolerance is quickly revealed as a disguised hostility, and not something generally recognizable as love.

Difference, whiteness, and narcissism. Finally, and relatedly, psychoanalytic theories also suggest that narcissism plays a role in the teacher-student relationship, as teachers wish to see themselves in their students, but are often thwarted when their students do not perform in recognizable ways, or ways that are legible to a teacher, causing a rupture in the love relationship when this desire is not met. Such a disruption in the idealized teacher-student (parent-child) relationship might open the door to love’s “unwelcome but inevitable partners” Boldt & Salvio (2005, p. 5): hate, aggression, need, and fear. Boldt borrowed a way of thinking about this from a popular book by Andrew Solomon (2012) that claimed that parents reinforce their children’s “vertical” identities, that is, the ones that they can see moving from one generation to the next, whether

perceived as genetic or sociocultural, and reject as flawed the “horizontal” identities, which are ones that seem foreign or “other” from the parents. Finding the horizontal identities so perplexing, parents or caregivers/teachers may then pathologize the difference (Boldt & Valente, 2014, p. 209)

Boldt addressed the narcissistic tendency for caregivers to desire and value familiarity instead of difference in their children and students in one study that looked at racial identity as something that might be affected by “narcissistic demands” (Boldt, 2006). Using her own biography as a white parent of a child whose identity is racially mixed--Asian American and white-European American--Boldt examined how she reinforced the performance of a non-white racial identity for her son, emphasizing the father’s racial identity, rather than her own, as a result of her negative associations with whiteness from her childhood (Boldt, 2006). She wanted to see her partner’s racial identity reflected in her child, describing repeated attempts to guide her son toward his Asian racial identity. This revelatory study holds implications for how we think about teachers’ desires to see their students perform particular racial identities. While Boldt didn’t address her choice to explore her own story as data, that decision offers a humble consideration of racial desires and even manipulations of teachers toward students, with the possible conclusion that intentionally or not, white teachers might desire to see themselves in their students, and reinforce a familiar (vertical) racial identity in order to feel connected to them.

It’s imperative to ask what the implications of narcissism are on racial inequity, if teachers do not “recognize” their students as similar to themselves. To think through this

construction, and certainly with full recognition of myself as a white teacher who strives to have anti-racist pedagogies, it seems necessary to consider the effect of love, or love's absence, for the education of African American students in schools, which continue to be such white institutions. Thandeka (1999) addressed this topic in her psychoanalytic framing of the price whiteness exacts from its "members," using narcissism to describe how difference (in racial identity and affiliation) can be experienced as an affront to a caregiver's authority, resulting in the caregiver (teacher, we'll say) withholding affection. I would suggest that this sets off a cycle of distrust, in which a student protectively keeps a distance from the teacher, and the teacher, foiled by this lack of connection, continues to withhold care and affection from the student.

Without thinking about it, white teachers might find that white students somehow reflect back a younger version of themselves, as in a mirror. The comparatively few teachers of color in our schools means that this reflection of self happens differently for students of color, who aren't afforded the same route to connection with their teachers. To be clear, this is not necessarily what happens, and it is almost certainly not an intentional dynamic, but it seems important to at least put it out there as one reason that some white teachers and their students of color do not have seamless communication and warm relationships. White teachers, and white teacher educators, might ask why Black feminist writing on education (Collins, 2004; hooks, 1994; Nash, 2013) consistently emphasizes as real and necessary the need for teachers to love African American students, and to encourage love for the self among these students, and other marginalized communities (indigenous students, for instance). This is not an accident, and it isn't

meant to punish the white students who aren't mentioned. If one manifestation of love in education mirrors a parent-child love, then it is powerful, but also damaging, when the love is differently offered and distributed; therefore, white teachers, especially—and I'm including myself, here--would be wise to stay alert to what we recognize, and what we desire from our students, and why. Here it is important to point out how frequently behaviors of tractability and compliance are selected as the desired ones, sometimes cloaked in trendy (and quickly discarded) words like “resilience” and “grit” but still essentially recognizable as ways of putting up with the status quo. If the status quo is white supremacy, actions that might be catalogued under intractable and noncompliant are perfectly reasonable responses from students who are not white, or who have been otherwise marginalized, for purposes of survival, for making or forcing change.

One possible antidote to the tendency toward control and force of a teacher's desire—thinking here of desired behavior, rather than racial identity--might be an effort to love what students might become, rather than focusing on the current situation. Jasinski & Lewis (2016) offered a notion of “whatever love” they named a “philosophy for infancy” that holds a love for students' “potentiality,” with links to Agamben's coming community. I'm not sure if the authors considered the extreme pressure for conformity placed on students within white institutions, but there is optimism in thinking that teachers and students could and should sidestep the “tyranny of the world” as an act of love (2016, p. 440).

Love Among “Equals”: Sister, Brother, Friend

Turning from the parent-child dynamic, the extra-kinship kind of love has enormous significance in classrooms. This is the love that occurs between classmates and friends, aspirationally, as equals, carrying hopes for a universal “brotherly” love (*philia*) and love for humanity (*agape*). For this reason, it’s related to conceptualizations of cosmopolitanism (described in more detail in Chapter 4). The loving relationship between coequals is also linked philosophically to dialogue (Freire, 1996) and communication (Dewey, 2011). Beyond what might seem like a utopian vision of social harmony, the experience of entering and participating in loving classmate relationships is not necessarily glorious, smooth, or even inevitable. Students, like everyone else, often dwell in entrenched affiliations, rather than attempting new friendships across social differences (Derrida, 1994; Martel, 2001; Yanay, 2012). That said, it’s possible to glimpse a way for such relationships to exist, within particular contexts, with particular individuals, as suggested in hooks’ (1993, 2003, 2006) discussion of classroom communities.

Universal Love and Cosmopolitanism. If a goal of “loving unification” was the “highest duty of mankind” (Steiner, 1924, paragraph 35), then teachers’ duties must include loving humanity, and also helping students to love humanity. Steiner’s beliefs came through the lineage of German Romanticism (e.g. Schiller’s “Ode to Joy”). He thought that schools could play a serious role in creating a “universal brotherhood of humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or color,” and that once teachers developed a “social feeling for the surrounding world, then the actual social [would be] possible” (Steiner, 1905, paragraph 26). In other words, with brotherly/sisterly love between the self and world, *I* would always be related to *you*, similar to Buber’s *I* and

thou. More than a bumper sticker (i.e. “COEXIST”), friend or peer love remains in the realm of hope, as-yet unrealized. Universal love has often appeared on the meta-list of reasons to go to school: “Education is the project of learning to live with others” (Britzman, 2009, location 548).

It is, indeed, a project. Learning to live with others is ongoing work, often oriented toward some vague utopian future; it’s what cosmopolitanism is all about, with its ideals of global citizenship through forged connections across, overlooking, or dissolving partisan (religious, political, ethnic, cultural) borders in hopes of creating a more peaceful world (Appiah, 2005; Kant, 1795). While the philosophy is not synonymous with love, and writing about it tends not to use the word, cosmopolitanism’s stance of hospitality toward the stranger seems very much a relationship of ethical, even radical, love.

Dialogue as love. Radical love is more often associated with Freire (1996), rather than belonging to the family of cosmopolitans. According to my “clumping,” Freire’s ideas about radical love belong in the category of love as desire, mediating toward a better future, but his *method* for getting to that revolutionary love can be located here in the love between peers, or coequals, section. Love between peers, Freire-style, imagines the awesome potential of a level, non-oppressive meeting between two or more individuals in dialogue. Dialogic engagement, as described by Freire, might be the deepest respect we can offer to someone else, requiring profound listening to and presence with another.

Freire's forceful argument against oppressor-oppressed, dominator-dominated relationships between teacher and student serves as inspiration to those who wish to change education's hierarchical dynamic. For teacher and student to meet each other in a more level manner, they must go through a "conversion" process, away from oppressive models, to undergo a "profound rebirth" into non-oppressive relationships of living alongside each other, with teachers accepting students' movements, doubts, and suggestions, rather than trying to impose on them their own agendas (1996, p. 43). As I see it, we need not stay with the roles of teacher and student when thinking about oppressive schooling relationships; these are readily found in the interactions between social actors in any classroom situation, given varying, dynamic differences in power. Therefore, dialogue, if achieved even momentarily, represents the tantalizing possibility for friendship and love among peers.

In explaining what he meant by dialogue, Freire emphasized its root *logos*, making a distinction between a word, and a *true* word. The first reflected skepticism about human intentions and truthfulness, as well as a modern/postmodern sense of language as untrustworthy. Conversely, a true word cuts through the untruths, the bullshit, by naming the world anew, unveiling the mythologies holding oppressions in place. Through this "act of creation" (1996, p. 70), one could transform the world. Or rather, the dialogic encounter with another could transform the world, since "no one can say a true word alone" (Freire, 1996, p. 69). Freire linked dialogue directly with love for both people and love for the world:

The naming of the world, which is an act of creation and re-creation, is not possible if it is not infused with love. Love is at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself. . . . Love is commitment to others. No matter where the oppressed are found, the act of love is commitment to their cause—the cause of liberation. And this commitment, because it is loving, is dialogical . . . If I do not love the world—if I do not love life—if I do not love people—I cannot enter into dialogue. (p. 70-71).

Freire saw dialogue as a creative and transformative encounter, which was a human right, an “existential necessity.” It follows, then, that since dialogue required love, and indeed *was* love in action, then love must be an existential necessity. Adding one more thing to this logical sequence, since non-oppressive learning is dialogic, this kind of learning may be viewed as an enactment of love.

Dialogue and Dewey’s theory of communication. Similarly, Dewey wrote about the primacy of communication between people, relationships, and the social world. Although he called for care, sympathy, and generosity in social relationships, it is Dewey’s description of communication that offers the more sweeping gestures toward love; his “free and full” communication, a collective, shared experience, was “the greatest of human goods” (1958 [1925], p. 202). He treated the topic of communication in multiple texts, always coming back to the goodness of interacting as a means of change and expansion.

All communication . . . is educative. To be a recipient of a communication is to have an enlarged and changed experience. One shares in what another has thought

and felt and in so far, meagerly or amply, has his own attitude modified. Nor is the one who communicates left unaffected.

(2011 [1916], p. 7).

Dewey made it sound like a fairly straightforward proposition: through participating and interacting, the individual would change and grow, and cause change and growth in others. The beauty of this “greatest of human goods” was how available it was, happening (potentially) hundreds of times each day for each person, and yet how monumental its impact might be, at the individual and societal level.

Such everyday, “normal communication” in classrooms (Dewey, 2011, p. 120), what we might recognize as Freirean dialogue, around “a joint interest, a common interest, so that one is eager to give and the other to take [in] contrast with telling or stating things simply for the sake of impressing them on another, merely in order to test him to see how much he has retained and can literally reproduce” (2011, p. 120) is capable of bringing about social change. In Dewey’s conception, student contributions and desires and interests were not less than those of the teacher, and, in fact, we need the other to know ourselves, thereby elevating the importance of social relationships in making meaning. As Britzman said: “There is no mind without the other’s mind, there is no passion without the other’s passion,” (2009, location 618). Placing value on the “other’s mind,” doesn’t mean we give up our own in a warped kind of altruism; instead, Dewey thought communication should be motivated by selfish as much as selfless interests for it to be equal between participants (1957; 1908). Garrison introduced a variation on this idea by emphasizing the need for teachers to care for the self, as much as

caring for others in a cycle of “reciprocal care” (2010, p. 68), implying that all participants received as well as gave as part of the interaction. Thus, communication/dialogue need not, and should not be sacrificial, or one-sided (didactic); through it, care or love could be distributed to both participants.

Participation and sharing open up possibilities for equal standing, a kind of radical openness between subjects, something Dewey hinted at in several spots by locating the individual as constructed and reconstructed in between self and the social world (2011 [1916], p. 191). Indeed, the fluidity of Dewey’s participating social self is both contingent and discursive, a notion of identity construction which is not usually associated with his time period. Dewey’s willingness to see, in an upbeat mood, the “uncertainty, doubt, hesitation, contingency” of the world (Dewey, 1957 [1922], p. 284) invites readers to find the cracks in his logic, and entertain multiple interpretations. As an example of one of these interpretations, Biesta (2013) observed that Dewey’s theory of communication crumbles under scrutiny, with a happy result. If “real” communication leads to change, then it can “only exist in and through transformation—which means . . . that communication is always already in deconstruction” (Biesta, 2013, p. 41). In other words, we can’t hold onto a frozen meaning/intention of our utterance, or action, because the minute we interact with another, our ideas and our selves change; the meaning of the communication is completely unstable. Biesta’s commentary on Dewey brings us back to Freire’s contention that “dialogue is love itself in action,” with emphasis on the action: the self that participates in dialogue doesn’t stay put, but shifts away, lurches toward.

Dialogue—meaningful interaction--requires opening the self to another: it is through contact that change and growth occur.

Friendship and love as improbable. I would be remiss if I didn't mention the many arguments claiming that the prospect of friendship, to say nothing of love, is logically impossible, or at least, improbable. What moves us from a relation of *not loving* to one of *loving*? In school situations, especially, how do students actually connect with each other, and how do teachers connect with students? Further, in the face of inequities and differing social status, why should oppressed groups be willing to meet and connect with their others?

Derrida (1994) explored these questions within shifting political theories of friendship, noting that it was impossible to fully trust another, because one can never fully know what is inside the other's consciousness. The promise of friendship was always on the horizon, a democratic event sometime in the future (p. 306). Martel (2001), drawing on Hobbes and Arendt, linked the word "love" more firmly to Derrida's discussion of friendship, naming the unlikely trust needed for friendship as a kind of "democratized eros" (2005, p. 200) because we must be convinced to love (p. 205). The "precious opportunity" (p. 214) to love another person, specific, imperfect, and not divine, is considered an unpredictable and unscripted act in which human agency might be most evident. I will add that there exists a desire for connecting across difference--what I'm referring to as "cosmopolitan desire" for meeting the "stranger" that might eventually become a friend or lover or some other kind of meaningful relation—that is both pleasurable and terrifying, a felt thrill (discussed further in Chapter 4).

The thrill has something to do with encountering someone different from the self, with none of the responsibility of care that comes with kinship or brotherly/sisterly love. Within friendship across difference, there is still a possibility for harm: “Friends recognize that we are all 'Others' to each other, capable of hatred and of harming each other to death” (Yanay, 2012, p. 123).

For all of its improbability, though, and in spite the existence of hatred and power imbalances, Yanay pointed to a lack of interest as the most socially dangerous response to the other. Thus, she argued, the language of friendship, even with frequent lapses and spotty "reciprocity, self-exposure, [and] shared power" (2012, p. 112), rather than the language of justice and fairness, has greater potential for social transformation. The final caveat in attempting to approach love among those who are *supposed* to be equals, such as students in the same class, is that the “call of friendship”—the invitation to enter a risky encounter of love and friendship with the other—is a “duty” belonging to those with more power, not those with less power (p. 124). Yanay appeared to refer to structural power that would be readily identifiable and cemented in a social situation, i.e. being white, being male, having money, or having institutional clout (teacher vs. student), in order to preserve the right of refusal for those who have been historically marginalized or oppressed. Unanswered, then, is the question of how to entice those with the most comfort in any given situation to become less comfortable by decreasing the distance between self and other.

Love in the social setting of a classroom: The context of group psychology.

Alliances and friendships are further destabilized by the fact that comfort is at least as

powerful as excitement. There is obvious comfort in belonging to a group, often held together by a charismatic leader. To belong to the group, students are required to exchange a form of obedience for love, just as they did for their teacher. Building on Freud's notion of group psychology, that love, coupled with force, is what holds groups together, Ahmed's (2004) work on affective economies fits here, in her theorizing of hate groups, such as white supremacists, who constructed their group through both hatred for those outside the group, and love for their "own," that serves to bind them together. Focusing on this love for their internal members ("in the name of love") and against other, in this case, racialized groups, the white supremacists renamed hatred as love, linking allegiance to their race with love for family, nation, and selected values, such as "liberty" (p. 122). In this argument, Ahmed contended that people typically don't simply act out of love. She worried about what might be concealed within the avowal of love, including not just hatred for difference, as with the white supremacists, but also hatred for those who refuse to adhere to the selected values of a group. Relatedly, Yanay (2012) pointed to how hate masqueraded as love and support for safety and order, for our own good. Her example was the way state violence is described as an act of protection--as in "keeping the peace"--coming at the expense of the other, through the dominant group's perceived danger of the stranger.

Love's role in shaping a demand for group conformity is germane to my thinking about schools and love, especially white teachers working with students with histories of marginalization through racial and cultural othering. Ahmed (2004) offered an example that is helpful here, in a discussion about how multiculturalism was constructed as a

national value in the UK, with a demand that all British citizens must love “difference” or else they would not be considered legitimate citizens. Loving difference affords subjectivity to the *citizen*, who is positioned as being “good or tolerant” toward the *stranger*, who is cast in the role of love object. Ahmed cautioned that multiculturalism as a value sets up a kind of “conditional love” (2004, p. 133) that is threatened by or those who “don’t accept the conditions of one’s love” (p. 134), that is, the strangers or others who do not give up their difference to the nation but stay linguistically and socially separate, seemingly rejecting the extended generosity of the multicultural state. In other words, “you must like us -- and be like us -- by valuing or even loving differences” (p.138). While students of color would most certainly reject “intolerant racist others” (Ahmed, 2004, p. 134) who actively oppose the values of multiculturalism, they might be equally unimpressed with the “help” of well-intentioned white people, progressive teachers or fellow students, who easily don a cloak of benevolence in attempting to create a loving, multicultural, cosmopolitan classroom. They claim knowledge, but miss the part about allowing differences to simply be different.

Love in community. Leveling the hierarchies in classrooms is a task that falls to the teacher, according to hooks, writing about schools and liberation struggles, more generally (1994, 2003, 2006). Seeking community, or communion (recalling Freire’s use of the word), she decried the dehumanizing effects of “dominator” culture on learning, both engagement and openness to new ideas, due to its divisiveness. She worried that competition between students both for the teacher’s attention and in order to be seen by the group as successful worked to erode any potential for community; thus, hierarchy in

education promoted a fear of failure and “disrupt[ed] connection” (2003, p. 130).

Competition “diminishes everyone,” placing a spotlight on some students, and forcing others into the shadows, rather than allowing for the kind of “deep listening” that honors differences among students (2010, pgs. 57-58). hooks indicated a connection between classroom competition and capitalism, asking her students: “Why do you think there is not enough love or care to go around?” (1994, p. 199). When students see love as a limited commodity within a classroom economy, competition creates a climate of distrust, and makes them more resistant to change; fear shuts students off from knowing their classmates well enough to experience differences, resulting in the exclusion of diverse viewpoints and people. hooks described competition creating in students a “will this be useful to me?” approach to their education, shutting out openness to the unfamiliar, and even generating hostility toward previously uncategorized perspectives with no clear utility.

According to hooks, teachers could create a more open learning community by entering into a relationship with students that is unabashedly based on an “ethic of love” (2006), and therefore would be different for each student. While this might seem dangerously soft in its subjectivity, hooks asserted that this was not so: “When we teach with love we are better able to respond to the unique concerns of individual students while simultaneously integrating those of the classroom community” (2003, p. 133). Pointing out that whenever love was broached as a serious topic, there was at least one voice (perhaps an internal one) suggesting that it is weak and irrational, hooks repeatedly (1994, 2000, 2003, 2006, 2010) countered that love is not only a sign of pedagogical

strength and fitness, but that if the teacher-student relationship were rooted in love, students would be observed carefully, and thus taught more responsibly, in the complexity of mind, body, and soul. Invoking King's "beloved community," hooks imagined love as both a choice and a practice, to be enacted through service, and through an expanded relationship between self and the "world beyond the self, the tribe, the race, the nation" (2006, p.250), toward transformation and freedom.

Desire-as-Mediator Model

As with the relationship model of love, the work that contributes to a mediator model of love comes from multiple theoretical frameworks; my discussion will look across these perspectives to trace affiliated conceptualizations. It is a logical proposition: briefly, love, in the form of desire, performs the mediating role of getting us from one point to another. Situated within education, desire or eros as a force inspires educators and students to take the present situation and imagine a better world. In discussing different ways of thinking through desire in education, I begin with Dewey's progressive philosophy, imagined as desire or eros in Garrison's (2010) work. The mediating model is evident in hooks' desire to transform classrooms into more human places, and in Freire's radical love that actively pushes—as a mediating force—for an end of oppressive relationships and structures. This is a revolutionary love that urges those who want a more just world to fight for it with courage and tenacity. In this section, I will also continue to think about how Black feminism imagines different futures through self-love, resulting in identity enactments that are expressions and expansions of self.

Desire or eros as mediator: Garrison's powerful text, *Dewey and erōs: Wisdom and desire in the art of teaching* (2010) developed a case for Dewey's "hidden philosophy of love" (p. xx). Taking his cue from Dewey's use of Plato, Garrison (2010) argued that eros, or desire, was the force that mediated between the actual and the possible, or what Dewey called the "ends in view" (Dewey, 1932 [1908], location 4280). Specifically, Garrison suggested that artful teaching, complex, sometimes tragic, often creative, and prophetic, was animated by eros, a passionate desire for the good. In Plato's *Symposium*, eros was described as a pure (hence the usual associations with "Platonic"), ideal, transcendent kind of love. In contrast, outside of Plato, eros is usually associated with sexual passion and desire (i.e. erotic love). Eros in the Platonic sense, Garrison explained, is the passionate desire not for a person, but for an ideal, an imagined future. It is conceptualized as a means—embodied as a mediating *daimon*--between the realm of humans and the realm of the gods. Garrison pictured artful teachers helping to move their students between the real and an imagined ideal. Teachers desired the ideal--the good--for their students, and helped students to desire it, as well. They build and hold this prophetic vision in order to call better futures into existence, as an act of *poesis*, or creativity.

For Dewey, there was no such thing as a Platonic ideal--it wasn't real, after all, and Dewey was all about the real--he had no use for notions of stagnant perfection, preferring the "beauty of things that are in change" (Dewey, 2005 [1934], p. 303). Dewey was interested in this world, so his ideals were not in the realm of the gods, although he reminded us that it is imperative to "connect the higher and ideal things of experience

with basic vital roots” (2005 [1934], p. 20). Dewey’s ideal (“ethereal”) things or “forms” were frequently aesthetic experiences, and the basic vital roots basically referred to all mundane lived experiences. He repeatedly suggested that desire (eros, per Garrison) was what prompted movement between the actual, the everyday, to something better, but he was adamant that both were important. And, while he seemed interested in destroying the binary between theory and practice, mind and body, Dewey continually traced a path between the two, which served to reinscribe the categories, at least somewhat. In speaking of “right ends,” “ends,” and “good” as the higher, ideal goal (Dewey, 1932 [1908]), a different possibility is conjured, something leading to wrong ends, or something less good, even “bad.”

Something about this good/bad distinction feels like it encourages a deficit, or overly patronizing view of the present situation, that teachers know what is good and what is not and that they will help get students from this current state to someplace better, sometime in the future. The vagueness of “naming the values needed in needful times” (Garrison, 2010, xvi) also causes me discomfort; needed values would be defined differently depending on who is allowed to make decisions on behalf of others. Dewey helped solve this problem, by leading away from “fixed, eternal ends,” in favor of thinking that “ends are, in fact, literally endless, forever coming into existence as new activities occasion new consequences” (1957 [1922], p. 213-214). These “endless ends” allude to Dewey’s construct of education as growth, and growth as the ultimate good.

And, to be fair, teachers *should* desire better futures for their students, as part of a meaningful education. Each day, teachers make decisions about what happens in their

classrooms; we must hope that they possess a critical and creative focus that recognizes each student's unique situation and desires, to make suggestions based on these, but not dictate (1997 [1938]), and finally, to actively guard against arrogance in thinking there is one apparent "best" end for all.

Desire as engine. Dewey's concept of growth was, as mentioned, synonymous with education: "Since growth is characteristic with life, education is all one with growing" (2011 [1916], p. 32). He saw growth and expansion as not just the way of learning, but as essential for sustaining life. Anything else resulted in decay and death. This growth was reached and re-reached through the means of desire. Dewey imagined desire (for growth) both as living, organic, the "forward urge of living creatures" (1957 [1922], p. 230), and as mechanical: the "moving spring" of action (1997 [1938], p. 70). Desire is a force or an engine that drives change, improves (hopefully), and never stands still. Dewey cautioned that we "forget much of what we learn in school, and elsewhere, so the most important thing is the *desire* to learn" (1997 [1938], p. 48). Such a declaration may now seem hopelessly out of date, harkening back to a time without the keen pressure of data-driven instruction, measures of effective practice, and the like. It was as simple and complicated as this, for Dewey: desire creates growth, growth is education, and education is life.

The engine in action: Desire in identity construction. Boldt (2009) helped flesh out the theorization of love as desire, through applying the concept to an emerging literacy practice. Using what she called a "social-psychoanalytic" approach, Boldt saw her son's "passionate love" for reading manga as an expression of libido, referring to

Freud's primary force of pleasure, pain, and arousal, something usually experienced bodily (Boldt, 2009, p. 251). Reading these texts, and entering into a full-bodied fandom, including drawing, talking, moving and acting out (play fighting, for example) all in the context of a favorite manga series, fulfilled her son's needs for friendship, love and identity. His literacy practices were connected to his identities as a tween, a Japanese American, and a male. She also suggested that this desire for manga was connected to social power, because it offered a chance to belong to several groups. He developed a strong connection with a friend who loved the series, as well as links to the wider community of fans. Further, it presented a path to belonging in his academic life, significant for an individual who had been marked as an unsuccessful reader in school. Through his construction as the manga person in the classroom community he became a "plausible social subject": a competent reader, resident expert, and even a rebel underground manga library proprietor (Boldt, 2009, p. 253).

Love for the world and simultaneous desire to change it. Love has frequently been imagined as both impetus and outcome for change: "I want to change systems: no longer to unmask, no longer to interpret, but to ... accede to the perfect vision of reality, to the great bright dream, to prophetic love" (Barthes, 1996, p. 60). Directly related to education, Britzman (2009) suggested that teachers operate out of a love for the world, a microcosm of which exists within themselves, and in their students, and this responsible love serves as both a driving and confounding force. Basically, the world is always in crisis, and we are anxious about, or we downright hate the real problems of the world, but at the same time, we very much love the world: "We love the world enough to assume

responsibility for it” (Britzman, 2009, location 646). Teachers work passionately in order to “save [the world] from ruin”--which is always sort of imminent--through social renewal, the transformative hope of their teaching (2009, location 646). They feel responsible for changing the world, and they also feel responsible, or somehow guilty, for indoctrinating their students into a world that is so flawed. In order to teach, teachers must admit that they, too, are products of this problematic world, and that students should understand and be able to navigate it. We might imagine the explanation thus: “I didn’t make this mess, but I did, in a way, and it made me, too. I participate in it, and so must you, or else we can never hope to make it better.” This cycle of love, desire and responsibility, Britzman implied, in some way feeds or fuels teachers in their work without totally defeating them.

Revolutionary, “armed” love. It is Freire who is probably most closely associated with love in education, which we can think of as a *desire* for overcoming oppressions. Freire’s radical, revolutionary love is akin to Dewey’s engine; it was a desire that he held, and that he advocated was necessary to fight for a better world. From the poet de Melo, Freire took the image of “armed love” to describe a “form of love that is indispensable to the progressive educator . . . that we must all learn” (2005, p. 74) to forcefully reject the status quo, to overturn whatever is keeping oppressive systems and practices in place. Freire reminded us that these are difficult to budge, and they take a multitude of guises. For instance, rather than “generat[ing] . . . acts of freedom” (1996, p. 89), both authoritarian and permissive schools most certainly participate in the (re)production of inequities. The love Freire spoke of in this way was not about kindness

or warmth of a nurturing relationship. No, the fierceness of armed love, this martial image, communicated Freire's urgency about what it would take to be a critical educator, and the inherent risk in challenging oppression, because it would almost certainly upset people who have something to lose. Freirean love is not an ethic of care (Noddings, 2013), and it isn't a "liberal, romanticized, or merely feel-good notion of love that is so often is mistakenly attributed to this term, nor the long-suffering and self-effacing variety associated with traditional religious formation" (Darder, 2002, p. 34). Freire's demand was for a love that was open (to all people, to all the world) and committed to a radical democracy.

One recent study took on the task of delineating how revolutionary love was performed in a particular classroom, and whether or not it "worked" (Lanas & Zembylas, 2015). The setting for this research was a village in the northernmost part of Finland, with students and families who had been marginalized for generations, despite Finland's rosy educational reputation. The teacher partnered with the researchers to enact practices that were deemed transformative and loving. Some of their assumptions about revolutionary love included the notion that it was both an emotion and a choice that required "doing." It was also a response to, and a relation between people. Finally, it was political and involved praxis (Lanas & Zembylas, 2015). After a year of documenting the teacher's many loving acts—including a major crisis of faith in the middle of the year and the resentment of the rest of the staff—they concluded that revolutionary love was a "viable" approach to teaching and improved the experience for teachers, students, the school at large, and the community; the labor of love entailed commitment, since it was

difficult and not constantly affirming. However, duly noting that rather than romantic or dramatic results, the outcomes were quite modest, they nonetheless found the stance to be worthwhile. I agree.

As a side note, the humility expressed in the Finnish setting is also one that Freire mentioned (1986) as necessary for critical educators. Emancipatory desires that demand an engagement in social justice from students might be a tall order, in everyday encounters. Teachers burning with a desire for social justice inadvertently and sometimes knowingly use their position, including the added force of the parent-child relationship, to exert social authority over their students. Through their desire for classroom communities to transform toward critical consciousness, they “constitute” students as *objects* of emancipatory pedagogy (Lather, 1991, p. 141), perhaps recognizing more joyfully those students who perform a commitment to social justice. Such desires for a better world—while laudable from the perspective of critical educators, myself included—delegitimize the experience and beliefs of students who either aren’t there yet, or may never get there (calling to mind Ahmed’s [2004] discussion of the demand to value multiculturalism, discussed above). In requiring the adoption of new knowledge over old allegiances and beliefs, the teacher’s desire for revolution might feel disempowering, a concern that seems to trouble critical feminist pedagogues, in particular (Ellsworth, 1989; Fisher, 2001).

Self-love as resistance: Black feminist love. As mentioned earlier, Black feminism (e.g. Collins, Davis, Jordan, Lorde), or womanism (Walker), repeatedly invoked a commitment to self-love as a political project of resistance, and a way toward

transformation. In her excellent discussion of early and later waves of Black feminist thought, including gesturing toward hip-hop philosophies, Nash (2013) argued that Black feminism put forth a “love politics,” with love as the vehicle for social change, ultimately, a “theory of justice” (2013, p. 3). Pointing out that such change must begin with self-love as a “practice of freedom,” Nash highlighted ways that self-love, and love for the racialized identity of Blackness was in itself a “highly rebellious act” (2013, p. 3, quoting Collins, 2004). Moving beyond the self, Black feminist theories imagined what might become, using language that reminds me of Greene’s “social imagination” in an orientation to the future that is creative, uncompromising, and certainly in line with Freire’s armed love: “If we win / there is no telling / we seek beyond history / for a new and more possible meeting” (Lorde, 1984).

Love as resistance: Methodology for social change. How, then, do educators make room for a plurality of perspectives, while still advocating the need for social transformation? And are we still talking about love? I argue that, yes, love—as desire--functions even when desires are not aligned, as a mediating technology between the actual situation and vision of an inclusive and non-oppressive future, and more, love has to be present in order to get people to work together despite and within serious differences.

Sandoval (2000) presented a vision of cross-disciplinary, cross-political collectivism by positioning love itself as a “social movement ... enacted by revolutionary, mobile, and global coalitions of citizen-activists who are allied through the apparatus of emancipation” (p. 183). Toward the towering goals of developing and

enacting an antiracist, antifascist, and anticolonial oppositional consciousness and praxis in her *Methodology of the Oppressed* (2000), Sandoval echoed Freire's title (and thus, his agenda), while enlisting similar articulations of resistance from Jameson, Barthes, Derrida, Foucault, and Haraway, before turning to Fanon and Anzaldua. Assembling a program of resistance to oppression flowing from desire and love, Sandoval imagined a new kind of citizen; instead of the "citizen subject," she used "citizen activist" and sometimes "citizen warrior" (p. 178), who, as "oppositional practitioners," could bring about the democratization of power.

One of Sandoval's most compelling themes, developed across disciplines, was a sense of wonder about the power of difference. Elevating the particular as emblematic of difference, placing value on the multiple, proliferation, juxtaposition, and disjunction over uniformity, Sandoval offered Anzaldua's *mestiza* way as a parallel to Haraway's (1985) cyborg feminism, both of which "blast apart binaries" (p. 165) in order to land on some kind of utopian, decolonizing zone of difference (p. 159), embracing an "elaborate specificity" wherein love enables a new means of social relationship, "reforming the self and the world" (p. 3).

While not arrived at via Sandoval's theoretical path, Thandeka concluded her *Learning to Be White* (1999) with a similar suggestion that we learn how to connect in the "realm of difference" (p. 105), saying: "Difference will be affirmed as the grace of human engagement" (p. 135). Is the realm or the zone of difference a wish for a magic transport into the (admittedly post-trendy) notion of liminal or third space? Perhaps.

Love “in the presence of others.” Once again it might be helpful to situate some of this within space and time. Boldt & Valente (2014) suggested a view of what coalition across difference could look like, in their study of an inclusive school in France that holds an intention for teachers and students (but especially teachers) to “live in the presence” of their others.

The school, located in the Paris suburbs, accepts all students for full inclusion, regardless of ability or disability. Noting that teachers at the school have the “need to find ways to feel connected” to their students, despite the barrier of their sometimes severe disabilities (Boldt & Valente, 2014, p. 209), they look for connection by noticing ways that the students are affecting them or other students and teachers. Or, in the absence of even these connections, Boldt & Valente suggested that teachers and caregivers saw these gaps (cracks) or interstices, between what was desired (connection) and what actually happened (lack of connection), and then critiqued “the norms and desires that structure our own meaning making, our desires for communality” (Boldt & Valente, 2014, p. 210). Teachers held an intention to “live in the presence” of their students (Boldt & Valente, 2014, p. 211), becoming part of one of many Deleuzo-guattarian assemblages of “new relations or possibilities” (Boldt & Valente, 2014, p. 210). An awareness of the interstices as productive spaces between and among individuals could highlight the existence of differences, without damning them. The authors suggested that living in the presence of others (and not the Other, singular, but the others, multiple) offered new ways of being in relationship, so that rather than a teacher demanding a narcissistic reflection of the (ideal)

self, she or he could seek a different experience of connection, and schools may offer an asylum--in the sense of a shelter--for children, and also for teachers.

Emergent/Erupting Categories of Love

Other avenues remain in the research on love in education. They could be clumped and traced, as affiliated ideas, but they have an aberrant quality to them that makes them exceptionally difficult to talk about, and therefore I place them as emergent categories. We might return to Foucault's image of a wild dancer making an unexpected appearance on stage, or a whale breaching right next to our kayak. It's hard to know what to do with these loves, but they are not ignorable, nor are they ignoble. I suspect that they are important.

First of these is a transgressive and unruly kind of love involving sexual attraction and real bodies. Don't look away! Erotic (non-Platonic) love in education exists, and while it has been broached most famously by hooks (1994), there are other studies that admit its appearance in education (Cohler & Galatzer-Levy, 2006; Johnson, 2005, 2010; McWilliam, 2000). The second outlier in the work on love, and sometimes love and education, is the notion of love as sacred, mystical, and unknowable/mysterious. This is a strand found in multiple frameworks, and has been mentioned by numerous writers. I am especially drawn to the womanist/Black feminist references to this conceptualization, although there are others (psychoanalytic and humanist).

Transgressive love: Bodies in classrooms

Moving beyond an effort to know and love students in their differences, hooks purposefully transgressed (1994) the boundary of what is conventionally accepted in

thinking about teacher-student love, developing a more radical case for love in classrooms that seeks to tap into love's excitement (ecstasy) in order to apply it to joy in learning. She did this by mulling over the potential of love, here imagined as a "motivating force" of desire: physical, intellectual, and spiritual (1994, p. 194), a concept that appears quite similar to the idea of eros or desire as a mediator.

All of this might sound humdrum and unremarkable, but then hooks made a turn toward sexual or romantic love in classrooms, between teachers and students at the college level, in a bid to unite the false split between mind and body, and as a way of stoking the fires of critical consciousness--uniting theory and practice--inviting praxis (1994, p. 195). Twenty years after publication, this is as attention grabbing and controversial as ever. According to hooks, students and teachers see each other in multiple ways in classroom interactions, one of which is an embodied experience as students gaze collectively at teachers, and teachers carefully observe students in groups and individually. While teachers and students may notice each other's physical presence, and may find the experience pleasurable, they are forbidden from acknowledging it, because it admits sexuality into the classroom. hooks complains that thinking about this kind of eros, or sexual desire, is not discussed in teacher education, and certainly it can take teachers, even veteran teachers, by surprise.

A handful of researchers in education, and undoubtedly more scholars in other fields, have addressed forbidden desire between teacher and student. One study (Johnson, 2010) looked at two teachers—both women--who "crossed the line" into sexual relationships with their male high school students. Johnson traced the incidents of

reported teacher-student relationships in the United States over a period of years, and included this numeric data in addition to qualitative interview data from the teachers. Apparently, more English teachers become physically involved with their students, and, while only 10% of the pool, more female teachers described themselves as “in love,” rather than solely confessing physical attraction and/or opportunity. The conclusion of this and other studies about these affairs was that, at a bare minimum, teacher education must tackle the topic in a similar way that psychologists-in-training come to grips with it. It must not be so stigmatized that it is never discussed. The silence surrounding the issue means that teachers are taken by surprise, and have no tools or support for working through what amounts to a completely common dynamic of attraction in the teaching and learning relationship.

While this is a taboo topic, and therefore sort of fascinating to me, for the purposes of this exploration I find value in hooks’ discussion of romantic/sexual desire in education. Contending that erotic energy exists in classrooms, hooks advocated against attempting to banish it from relationships (which would not be possible). To speak of *energy* is to open oneself to accusations of “woo-woo” thinking, of course, but, hooks’ numerous forays into the topic (1994, 2003, 2010) remind me that, all woo-woo-ness aside, teachers—and here I recognize it in myself, and saw it in the teachers in my study-- often exert personal persuasiveness, charm, or what you might think of as flirtatiousness, in order to connect with students, and engage them in projects of any kind. At the very least, harnessing a desire to participate in some kind of heightened (erotic-but not erotic)

dialogue, which hooks refers to as a “dance” at one point (1994, p. 197) is required in order to provoke in students a desire for learning and growth.

Picking up this energy idea, McWilliam (2000) lamented the “thin, wise loving” that teachers are required to practice in the pursuit of predictable learning outcomes (p. 27). “Eschew[ing] voluptuousness” (p. 27), they are controlled, and intentionally disembodied. McWilliam equated pleasure (including joy) with sexual pleasure, a move used in other treatments of the topic (e.g. Cohler & Galatzer-Levy, 2006). I question this, and I think most teachers would not shun school-appropriate pleasure as uncomfortably close to sexual gratification. However, the disciplining of emotional expressions, as emblematic of emotional relationships, certainly puts boundaries around the possible range of human experience available in classrooms, and therefore places boundaries around what is felt while learning.

Love’s mystery

All of this talk of energy leads to hooks’ development of love as unknown and unknowable, one of life’s great mysteries: “We must dare to acknowledge how little we know of love in both theory and practice” (hooks, 2000, xxix). As Plato, Steiner, and others (e.g. Arendt’s thesis on St. Augustine and sacred love, 1996) indicated, it might be a route to, and even a “craving” for the divine. It might be this elusive quality that leads hooks to state: “the presence of love in the classroom ushers in the sacred” (2010, p. 154). This kind of sacred love brings us back to Plato’s notion of eros as a mediating daemon between earthly concerns and the divine and/or ideal, or, as with Garrison’s take on Dewey, eros as the force that helps transport us from the actual to the imagined, the

means to “better” futures. Therefore, we find that hooks’ logic is only as “woo-woo” as Dewey’s logic. If love is a “transformative force” (2000, p. xix) with enormous power, then part of its power, it seems, might lie in its resistance to definition and organizing.

However, since the sacred finds its way into the discussion about love, what else can be learned from it? Black feminism’s “long labor” of love-politics (Nash, 2013, p. 19) includes an understanding of love as spiritual (Walker), or sacred (e.g. Jordan, hooks). Jordan imagined a love that could extend in almost super-human ways beyond the self. In her essay, “Where is the love?” June Jordan emphasized “a steady-state deep caring and respect for every other human being, a love that can only derive from a secure and positive self-love,” that offered a “sacred possibility” (Jordan, 2002, p. 272) for remaking the public sphere. Some have argued that Black women are uniquely positioned to “do love” as the work of social justice--owing to histories of dehumanization and concomitant spiritual practices—and that relationships to and within church offer models for coalition-building and social change (Edwards & Thompson, 2016). Somewhat analogously, Anzaldua suggested that the mestiza consciousness—the intersection between cultural and spiritual worlds--was a place of not only ambiguity, but also tenderness, and a new vulnerability (2012, p. 106).

Irrational love. Focusing on the student experience, Boldt made the point that her son’s desire to belong in the manga community via his identity as a manga fan was not necessarily explainable, to him or to others. What we really want from the beloved object or person isn’t necessarily known, but it is experienced powerfully, all the same. Boldt suggested that rather than trying to understand or manage a student’s attachments,

teachers should leave space to allow for the mystery of the passion to rest, in the unconscious, presumably. Her idea was that an attachment “might perform a very important and indeed liberatory function for the child” (2009, p. 256). Her son, for example, didn’t know why he loved manga so much, but this may have been part of the pleasurable experience for him—the “mystery and intoxication of love may be, in part, that piece that exceeds our mastery” (Boldt, 2009, p. 260).

The irrationality of love may be especially important in the era of testing and accountability, and teachers, along with everyone else, might be advised to accept the mystery in students, rather than trying to solve, or resolve it. To revel in the “unfathomability of human beings” (Bauman & Donskis, 2013, p. 11) is to combat indifference, and might be a way of nurturing difference. Making a similar plea, Von Wright (2009) argued that education needed to make room for (simultaneously, and not in isolation) the three concepts of authority, love, and mystery within pedagogical settings, in order to engender feelings of belonging in tandem with true curiosity and passion.

Implications

I conclude this genealogy by wondering what these approaches offer my own thinking and research about how love in education may be defined and theorized, and how it is mobilized in lived teaching and learning experiences. Love in educational settings has the potential to sustain teachers and students in difficult situations, in relationships and toward better futures. Less optimistically, seeing love in its more difficult forms may help us to understand and address aggressive impulses, anger, fears,

and resentments. One doesn't need to accept all aspects of psychoanalytic theory, for example, to see that strong feelings abound in classrooms, demonstrated in word, action, and gesture, in absence and presence. In asking how love is mobilized in learning situations with people who find themselves together, as teachers and students, in actual classrooms, I remain most curious about how classroom practices can allow for real differences, including identities and experiences of being raced, classed, gendered, as well as other social and cultural positions, how students can meet each other across these differences, without flattening them, and how teacher's relationships with students can support meaningful and powerful learning.

Love in the Zone of Difference

As discussed above in "Difference, whiteness, and narcissism," perceptions about and experiences of race have an impact on love in education. How can they not, in a world such as ours, with such confusion, pain, and paralysis around the subject? According to Joseph & Duncan (2007), love is a "potent force that reduces distance in social relationships," standing in contrast to indifference (2007, p. 207). Using the conceptual category of "beyond love" to describe how African American students are excluded, expelled, and shut out from school economies and social networks, Duncan analyzed the culture of a school that prided itself on creating a loving environment, showing that this was not the experience for the adolescent African American male students who attended it (Duncan, 2002).

The demand for conformity adults place on the children in their care occurs regularly in schools, especially in the pairing of a white teacher with students of color,

because many white teachers *perceive* the behavior of white students as less “different,” and therefore more recognizable, and more lovable. Boldt pointed to the possibility of breaking this pattern of needing to erase difference through “living in the presence of others” (Boldt & Valente, 2014), and similarly, Thandeka suggested we learn how to connect in the “realm of difference” (1999, p. 105). To study connections in the realm of difference, between students and students, and between students and teachers, could shed light on the conditions under which such moments occur, and what they produce.

The dialogic relationships between students are also of interest in thinking about the presence of love in learning settings. Certainly, in looking at classroom interactions, the way that love is expressed, followed, withheld, and wielded among students and groups of students is of great interest to me, and, has tremendous power to keep students engaged and attracted, as well as repelled from learning situations and projects. Freire, and, indeed Bakhtin, look to the zone of difference as an opportunity for dialogue, a meeting “place” between “I” and “thou.” Students can and do spend time in the zone of difference. Love in this dialogic relational sense creates expansion, and growth, and ultimately results in possibilities for democratic participation across difference.

Concluding thoughts

There are, undoubtedly, more unexplored approaches to love and education, especially if it continues to “trend” at the national conferences. Despite some interest in love as an antidote to the neoliberal agenda, there is not an overwhelming surge of scholarly attention on the subject. We can learn something about love’s role in classroom interactions, whether or not it is demonstrated, and whether or not it is spoken, in

moments of mutual aggravation and forgiveness, in moments that might look beautiful, and those of frustration in the extreme. It is more available for some students, than others; it is present, even in its absence, and while it can be faked, this dishonesty will be detected, since, despite what McWilliam (2000) said, “thin love ain’t love at all” (Morrison, 1998, p. 164).

Love is a choice requiring action, as Lanas & Zembylas (2015) pointed out, a commitment to enter relations of care and kindness, but equally, a commitment to insist on (to desire and engender desire) in better futures. Such tasks ask much of teachers, who, like their students, might be willing to put up with the discomfort of everyday love if it is allowed to retain some mystery. Preserving love, in fact, might require that we value and strive for love, while not understanding it fully, lest we lose interest in the whole endeavor.

Chapter 3

Methodology of a Multi-Site Ethnography

This chapter provides an overview of the research design for this critical ethnographic study, with a discussion of my approach to ethnographic research, and a theoretical and practical explanation of the primary analytic method, mediated discourse analysis. Next, the classroom sites and the participants are presented in some detail, including my role as a researcher and participant in the settings. Following an explanation of the data sources and analysis process, I conclude with a discussion of ethical considerations about the study, such as my position and perspective, and the limitations of the research.

Finding that theoretical discussions about the role of love in learning experiences far exceed empirical research projects on the subject, this study seeks to name moments of its emergence, action, and impact through observation and participation across two classrooms. Drawing on multiple conceptions of love, as explored in the previous chapter, allows the necessary theoretical elbowroom in interpreting the events and relationships that unfolded and overlapped in the complex social settings of the classrooms. I argue that there remains a need to describe love in its variety, and that ethnographic research is an approach that offers the greatest opportunity to notice both the everyday rhythms and the sometimes-stunning irregularities in the school days of students and teachers. In the interest of this variety, I have sought out different schools, different classrooms, and different teachers and students, to notice what I could about love within the particular cultures of these spaces, to see and describe its actions, and

what it made possible, based on sustained attention to words and movements, to productions, performances, conversations and interviews with students and teachers.

My research questions reflect my interest in seeing the plurality of learning situations, while also seeking patterns and convergences. I include them here, in the same form as they appeared earlier. Note that the fourth question about aesthetic experiences remains. As will be argued in Chapter 5, aesthetic experiences may occur when teachers and/or students set up conditions for, insist upon, and imagine/create something new, hopefully better. This is the kind of love that was described in Chapter 2 as mediating between an actual situation and a desired possible future—sooner, rather than later--love conceived of as desire-as-engine, or revolutionary love.

1. How do students and teachers make meaningful connections with their social others, and what happens as a result?
2. How is love visible in learning settings, and what does it look like?
3. What work does love do, especially for students who have been historically marginalized, made to feel separate, and/or described in sedimented ways in the mass media, and in dominant public discourses (raced, class, gendered, etc.)?
What, if anything, changes for students and teachers as a result of an expression or experience of love?
4. What, if anything, is the relationship between love and aesthetic experiences in classrooms?
 - A. What are aesthetic experiences in the classroom?

- B. How/what can we learn from aesthetic work, the interactions and collaboration while making it, the performance of this work, and the way it is talked about?
- C. What does it express?

Qualitative Inquiry

While deeply interested in the everyday experiences of the students and teachers in the classrooms in this study, I don't suggest that my efforts to convey these experiences will be exact representations of "reality." In fact, I assume, as a post-positivist chronicler of qualitative research, that reality itself is socially constructed (Denzin & Lincoln, 2006), and that I am wound up in my questions about the experiences of the participants, and so, am implicated in an artificial construction of truth, deliberately. Still, I want to learn something about these questions, and so will attempt to balance the crisis of representation (Lather, 2007) with the hope that it is possible to investigate both familiar and unfamiliar episodes/phenomena, and make sense of them, imperfectly, but responsibly.

A key consideration in my efforts to be responsible, then, is to make sure that while I may be "constituting" (Fine, 1994) my participants and myself, I endeavor to constitute them in their complexity and multiplicity. Heeding Fine's (1994) warning to beware "frozen identities" (p. 80), I hope that I convey the plurality of my participants' voices, not to "know" or "give voice" to them, but to know some things about what happened for them in the context of the study. I aim to pay close attention to what they said and wrote and made, and what, according to them, mattered to their school and life

experiences during the time of the study. Again, listening to Fine (1994), I retain tentativeness about committing a sin of imperialism in representing the participants as Other, but I find equally sinful the idea that I can hike up my pant legs and wade across the hyphen between self and other to claim a “withness” that is only partially possible with my participants. In further levels of compromise, I am not interested in being so skittish about my settings and participants that I “withdraw” from interpretation (p. 81). My aim is to understand a full range of educational experiences, but to focus especially on those that are meaningful and fair, and educational relationships that sustain teachers and students, and show us something about how we can connect across social differences, toward a just redistribution of power.

Research Design

Critical Ethnography

For this multi-site critical ethnographic study, I spent time getting to know students and teachers in two classrooms, at two schools, taking in the “highly situated” (Geertz, 1988) details concerning time, place, people, histories, and episodes. I was in the classrooms at four to five days a week, for one semester each (and a bit more, spending roughly five months in each setting with return visits to both sites). Through paying attention to all classroom practices and events, I created “inscriptions of social life and social discourse” (Emerson et al, 2011, p. 13) in my mind, as they occurred, while simultaneously participating in these interactions, and in field notes either during or after each day’s visit.

Despite spending time in two classrooms and trying to understand the interactions and cultures of each, I was working against the more positivist assumption that there is such a thing as a “classroom community,” singular, or even a collection of identifiable communities in a classroom space (Philip et al, 2013). There were multiple and shifting alliances and social relationships, informed by larger power dynamics, also shifting.

Maintaining curiosity and attention to the ways teachers and students interacted, and the ways that students interacted with each other, across difference and in more established relationships of social comfort, I am persuaded by the notion that dialogue was not only an important aspect of this study of classroom discourse, but that it also necessarily informed my interactions with participants and data. Such dialogue “resists conclusions . . . [and] is intensely committed to keeping the meanings between and the conversation with open and ongoing. It is a reciprocal giving and receiving” (Madison, citing Conquergood, 2005, p. 9). While I have worked to avoid a stance that sets up a self-Other in conducting ethnographic research, I was most certainly a visitor, a perspective that kept me one step away from “insider” in the world of the classrooms I visited. I think this distance helped “make strange” the actions and interactions I observed, allowing for and even demanding that I keep meanings and interpretations, open.

Translocal ethnographic research. The two school sites for the study were indeed separate, but they were linked by my design through some commonalities, amounting to a multilocal, even a translocal project, with two local units connected through the field study. The pitfalls of conducting two ethnographic projects in one

academic year were mainly that I ended up spending less time altogether in each classroom than I would have done with just one site for the entire school year. While I'll admit that I may have sacrificed some depth and breadth for this reason, I don't think it's necessary to subscribe to Hannerz's (2003) somewhat wry observation that researchers doing multisite ethnographic research lose out on the "moral position" of becoming quasi-insiders (p. 209). It was important to see the actions of students and teachers in two quite different classroom cultures, not in order to generalize, or compare, but in order to see if "being there ... and there" (Hannerz, 2003) would demonstrate that love mobilized actions in all kinds of situations, with all kinds of people, that it was not dependent on a certain bounded locality.

Critical research. For this study I used critical interpretive methods, in addition to a critical context, since both teachers—whom I refer to as "Ms. D." and "Ms. K."--had explicit goals of teaching and learning to disrupt the status quo. Leaning on Foley's (2005) self-description as a "cultural critic in search of collaborative methods,"(p. 222), this study involved the above sense of dialogicality in relationships with participants/members of the classroom groups through almost daily conversations with teachers that were often directly related to our common stands "*against Othering, for social justice*" (Fine, 1994, p. 81, italics in original). In approaching the data, I continually wondered how the diverse experiences of students and teachers might demonstrate something about how schools can become more just and humane places.

In addition, I wondered to what extent students and teachers were able to upset dominant discourses about meritocracy, or about who was worthy in this varied social

landscape. Certainly the student projects and course curriculum in the two classes were fundamentally engaged in both local and more macro conversations about dislodging interpersonal as well as entrenched and structural barriers to equity in education. For me, the biggest struggle we face in public education is that of racial injustice, and this was part of the ongoing dialogue, learning, and action in both of these racially mixed classrooms.

Mediated Discourse Analysis (MDA)

In addition to ethnographic methods, I used mediated discourse analysis (MDA) as a theoretical and methodological tool to interpret the complex, “multichanneled” social setting of these specific classrooms (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 2011, p. 13). Mediated discourse analysis offers a framework for researching social practices, social change, and agency. It is rooted in the idea that meaning lies in the *actions* people take with discourse, “preserv[ing] the complexity of the social situation” (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 4). An action occurs in time and space; it is particular, rather than general. Each action is an intersection of people, objects, and discourses, following somewhat traceable routes and trajectories from what has come before and toward what comes after, and subject to the limits of the interpreter’s purview. A mediated action is understood to be a social action, an action-in-the-world, created by social actor(s) using mediational means.

In my understanding of MDA, I draw from ideas outlined by de Saint-Georges (2005), Norris & Jones (2005), Scollon & Scollon (2003, 2004), and Wertsch (1998). In addition, critical discourse analysis (Gee, 2011, 2014) is used to describe what is being built (e.g. relationships, identities, ideologies) within selected interactions.

Mediational means. Mediational means, referred to as “cultural tools” by Wertsch (1998), are both material objects (such as an iPhone) and what Wertsch referred to as “psychological” tools (such as language) that mediate between actors and their social worlds. Norris and Jones (2005) argued that because all means carry histories of practice in the *habitus* of the users, all means might be considered “psychological processes.” This seems fair, although I prefer to think of them as nonmaterial tools, symbolic or not, internalized processes. In any case, through using a mediational means, an actor inevitably transforms a cultural tool, even if only just a bit from its original use. So, too, the tool may transform its user. Because all mediational means carry with them layered and dynamic histories, which can be transformed through use—entailing recontextualizing and remixing--they are polyvocal, interdiscursive and intertextual (Norris and Jones, 2005).

Nexus analysis. Mediated actions, then, have histories connected to the actors and the mediational means. In mediated discourse analysis, these actions may become routinized as social practices that build up over time. The convergence of linked actors, histories, and discourses is what Scollon and Scollon (2004) referred to as a nexus of practice: all meet at a site of engagement, a sort of social occasion (Saint-Georges, 2005, p. 157). Studying the nexus of practice for “problems and possibilities” (Norris & Jones, 2005, p. 203) sets the intention of marking ongoing patterns of power and dominance; it also seeks to investigate and expand on disruptions and moments of agency. The emphasis on tracing histories and trajectories in time and space connects analysis of any site of engagement to the exigencies of the larger social world.

I used nexus analysis in Chapter 4 of this study, and some elements of MDA throughout Chapters 5 and 6. Following, with greater and lesser degrees of faithfulness, the suggestions of Scollon and Scollon (2004), and moving recursively between video transcripts, artifacts, interview transcripts, and field notes, I identified “key” social actors, and built on my understanding of their histories, both within and beyond the site of engagement, observing carefully their interactions within the context. Analysis centered on how they transformed signs, or landed upon “new ways of doing things or seeing things” (Norris & Jones, 2005, p. 203), with attention to the multiple timescales and histories of participation related to and surrounding the mediated action. Finally, I looked to how actions were distributed among social actors over time and space, always with the goal of highlighting, when present, positive social change (Norris & Jones, 2005).

Research Context and Sample

The two settings contained several key similarities: both were located in large Midwestern cities, both had racially, ethnically, and economically diverse student groups, and both classrooms had teachers with commitments to social justice and critical literacy, in combined English-Language Arts and Social Studies courses.

Setting 1: Midtown High School

Midtown is a large (1778 students), diverse high school in a fairly large city school district containing eight high schools, several district-run specialty and alternative schools, and many charter schools. Midtown houses three distinct academic focus areas: a college-bound liberal arts program, an open program, and a program for indigenous students. The school’s racial and ethnic make-up is very similar to the demographic

percentages of the district as a whole. The reason for this is not because all of the schools have an even distribution of different racial groups: Midtown is unique in that it straddles the racial divides in the district. Most of the other schools are more segregated, either with mostly white students, or with mostly students of color.

Table 1
Demographic information about Midtown High School

<i>District & school-wide data</i> (including wording of categories) about students was taken from their respective websites. <i>Projects</i> class data is based on self-identification from all students.	District % n=35,717	Midtown % n=1778	<i>Projects</i> Class % n=42
Native American	4	7	2
African American	38	36	42*
Asian American	6	5	2
Hispanic American	18	19	14
White American	34	33	47
Receive ELL services	22	21	Not available
Quality for free or reduced lunch	62	56	Not available
Receive Special Education services	18	13	Not available

*Half of the students in this group (within the Projects class) identified themselves as “African American,” and half described themselves specifically as “Somali American.”

Projects Class. For the study, I am referring to the Midtown High School class as “Projects,” to reflect the ideas of *projecting* one’s voice, and to underscore the requirement that students created or produced something substantial, a *project*. Students at Midtown typically take classes within their academic focus area, but any 12th grade student who wanted to join the Projects class (part of the liberal arts program) could register for it, assuming there was enough room. Students were supposed to submit a statement of interest in the class, to demonstrate a degree of earnestness, but several

students informed me that they had not been required to do this by their counselor. This class makes different demands on students, because it requires that students take a stand for something, in the name of a better, more just society, and that they share this critical position through the production of digital texts. The three summative projects for the course were designed as a progression in skill and complexity of thought, with a movement from self, outward to the world. The first project was a *This I Believe* essay and a series of original photographs. These images were presented in a slideshow while the students performed their essay as a speech, in front of all 42 members of the combined class. Second was a podcast, created with a partner (most of the time), on a topic of some urgency and relevance. These audio explorations were supposed to highlight a local connection, so community stakeholders and authorities were interviewed as part of the podcast composition, and Garage Band was used to create a rich, heteroglossic text. Finally, groups of 4-5 students created a documentary film illuminating a pressing social need or dilemma—sometimes a continuation of the podcast topics--again with the idea that students would bring and further develop a passion for their subject, and that they sought to make their audience care about the dilemma, as well. iMovie was used for editing the films, which were screened publicly at a local movie theater. The desired quality was spelled out in the course description: all projects, from the photos and speeches to the podcasts and films were to be thoughtful, multi-voiced, multi-perspective, historically situated, persuasive texts.

Touring Midtown. Midtown High School is a sprawling cement structure (c. 1970), located in a busy part of the city. Most students say it doesn't have any windows,

but this isn't accurate. There is one tiny (2' x 4') sliver in each room, sometimes two. To enter Midtown High School, you must find the subtle doorway from a parking lot, and leave your ID at a folding table with a security person on duty. I did this practically every day for five months, and the routine never varied. Just past the security desk, the view opened up to a large cafeteria space with some roof windows offering natural light in an otherwise dim interior. Above the cafeteria on the second floor was a wrap-around balcony, upon which security personnel, teachers, and administrators paced, and kept watch over the students below. An enormous student-made mural covered the walls at the turn in the staircase leading to the Projects classroom; images on this mural convey the history of the country ("We the people" is shown being stitched in cursive onto fabric in an embroidery hoop) exuberantly comingled with a diverse activist history of the state and city. Indeed, the students at the school are known for their participation in struggles for justice, from boycotting standardized testing to protesting police violence.

The Projects classroom is located toward the back of a warren of rooms on the second floor. While meetings took place in both the English and Social Studies classrooms, the bulk of the students usually ended up in Ms. D.'s ELA room, which was crowded with artwork, posters, signs, pictures, books, desks, bodies, piles of papers, notebooks, and trash in a messy tangle of objects and grime. The room was often overheated because Ms. D. gets cold: most days at least one student bursts in and complains loudly "Oh my god, it's sooo hot in here!" There are three hubs in the room: (1) the area around Ms. D.'s desk, at the back, (2) a large central table, ideal for collaborative work or just food-sharing, and (3) a small round table at the front, for presentations and group

work. Individual desks were mostly supposed to be arranged in a semi-circle, two deep, although they traveled into little groupings depending on the activity. Students also created base camps in the hallway outside Ms. D.’s room, and some gravitated toward the cooler and less crowded Social Studies classroom of Ms. L., three doors down.

Setting 2: Critical Academy (CA) Middle School

At ten years old, Critical Academy is barely in its adolescence, but it’s been around long enough to have weathered some crises and remained standing, to have proven itself as a legitimate urban charter school. It’s a recognizable entry in the category of small, critical schools, founded on principles of critical literacy and feminism—it is a girl-focused program--using pedagogies and assessments that were innovative at the time of its inception, such as inquiry-based STEM instruction. The school literally asks students to wear its mission statement, through printed t-shirts such as this one emphasizing student agency: “Asking questions, making choices.” Goals for the learning community were visible in printed materials and posted in the classrooms: Practicing Mutual Responsibility and Individual Accountability, Searching for Truths, Building Empathy, Developing Generosity of Spirit, Becoming Competent, Acknowledging Paradox and Dilemma, Recognizing Strength in Vulnerability.

Table 2
Demographic information about Critical Academy

Demographic categories and % were taken directly from CA’s annual report for 2015-16. Data for the LA-SS class came from student self-identification, except for the SpEd information.	Critical Academy % n=152	Language Arts- Social Studies % n=19
African American	35%	37%

Latino	10%	16%
Asian/PI	9%	5%
American Indian	8%	5%
White	38%	37%
Free or reduced lunch	50%	Not available
Special Education	18%	26%

Language Arts-Social Studies Class. The overarching idea behind the curriculum for Ms. K.'s Language Arts-Social Studies was global studies. The specific units flip-flop each year to account for the vertical grading, so that a student who is in 7th grade during one year will have a different experience the following year, as an 8th grader. This year, the course was framed around the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child. While the curriculum was flexible, even in flux, some of the areas of inquiry included: child labor, how wars affect children, how migrations affect children, and access to education for girls. During the second semester, the class read a novel called *Iqbal* (D'Adamo, 2003), about a child laborer and activist in Pakistan (based on a true story), they learned about the Hmong migration to the area, they created and distributed 'zines about issues that they cared about, and they presented information and artifacts to describe a cultural group to which they felt connected.

Touring Critical Academy. This charter school is located on a stately city boulevard near a small college; it's in the education wing of an old church property that also houses a completely separate daycare. The toddlers take a left when entering the

building, and the middle schoolers head to the right, and up the stairs. They occupy the second and third floors, plus a cafeteria that doubles as the gymnasium. Despite its small size, the office person requires visitors to sign in, which I do every day (because she insisted when I grumbled about it). Walking around the hallways, you get a sense of the goals and mission for the school through posted social codes, encouraging slogans, anti-racism signs, and promotions for school events. Students periodically add their own informal welcomes, such as a post-it note on the front door: “Be who you are! Thanks for being queer!” There are inspiring women painted along one hallway, like Rosa Parks, Harriet Tubman, and Eleanor Roosevelt. Bulletin boards display student work outside of most classrooms.

The Language Arts-Social Studies combined classroom for grades 7-8 was always dark. The overhead lights, even when on, were dim and yellowish, and three or four lamps cast only a glow in different areas of the room. A row of windows on one side of the room offered more light, as well as a view of tree branches, and when the windows were open you could hear the daycare voices squealing below. There were hundreds and hundreds of books shelved by genre on three sides of the room, although these were frequently strewn around haplessly, waiting for a volunteer or a teacher or me to re-shelve them. The room was always messy, something Ms. K. shared with Ms. D. (While no neatnik myself, I periodically gave in to my desire to tidy things up in both classrooms.) The space contained 30 desks, but the 5th hour class was small, with only 19 students, so every time the group convened there was an effort to sort of shove the extra desks out of the way in order to make a more intimate arrangement of furniture, and to

keep the students in a central location for conversation and work. Fighting with this interest in corralling students were three couches, several low rocking chairs usually used for playing video games, and the bank of deep window ledges, all ideal for horsing around, for hiding and sending endless Snapchats (phones were technically, but not practically, forbidden during class time), and for drooping, exhausted adolescent bodies. Every other week, and sometimes more frequently, the three teachers working with this group of students completely switched up the lay-out of the room, with a mixture of goals, but most often in the interest of productivity, focus, and community. Some days the desks were in rows, other times in rows of double desks, other times there were pods, and sometimes they were set up audience-style in a tight semi-circle.

Selection of Participants

Following IRB approval, I presented the study to each class, explaining that participation in the research was voluntary; both parental and student consent was sought. At the high school, 85% of the students returned their forms, and at the middle school, 90% of the students returned consent forms. I frequently (upon recording an interview, for example), repeated the possibility for students to deselect themselves or their individual responses. I also made a point of explaining that I was interested in how they *talked* to each other, as well as what they *created* for the class. I didn't bring up the idea of love, because I wanted to see actions, more than anything, and I assumed it might be off-putting. I discussed my interest in relationships, dialogue, and in their literacy productions. I hope this wasn't duplicitous, but I honestly don't think it was. I did tell both teachers about my interest in love, while not going into any detail about how I was

defining it, aside from saying that I didn't think love meant anything about being sweet or nice with students, lest they feel uncomfortable pressure to perform a syrupy version of themselves.

I purposefully selected eight students at each site as focal participants to interview (interview protocols for students and teachers are included in Appendices A & B) based on their differences, to get a cross-section of the population. As noted, the overall student body in both settings was racially, ethnically, economically, culturally diverse, and I wanted to have similar ratios of these "categories" in the focal student groups.

In the gender category, I will also add that in the girl-focused middle-school setting, the research participants all identified as female, and many of them made references to their sexual preferences either during informal classroom talk or directly in their literacy productions. Interestingly, the diversity in the high school classroom didn't necessarily extend to gender performance and sexual preference: while gender-fluidity and establishment of transgender bathrooms were of interest to many students in the class, all students in the study were seemingly cis-gendered, and none made clear their sexual preference during class talk or interviews.

Another category I sought diversity in was participation in the life of the class. I wanted to select students who demonstrated varying levels of engagement and buy-in at both sites: some who seemed very engaged, but also those who were not obviously excited about being there. I viewed these considerations as aids in achieving a theoretical sampling of the population, because I was interested in those individuals who could contribute to the evolving theories of love in these classrooms.

While I find it problematic to offer the “facts” about my participants, a scant gloss on who they are through the “standardized naming of gender, race, class, sex, and ethnicity” that “offers a sense of security that one will be able to successfully make sense of what and who is being read about--in advance of the actual reading” (Gonick & Hladaki, 2005, p. 291), I present selected information about these participants in a brief overview (Appendix C). What follows are sketches of the focal participants who are featured prominently in the data chapters (Ch. 4-6).

Selected Midtown Participants

Midtown Teacher: Ms. D. Ms. D., a white, middle-aged woman, has been teaching for almost twenty years in the same urban district, although she has worked in two different high schools. She team-taught the Projects class with Ms. L., who had a more low-key, conflict-avoiding style. Ms. D. brought an incredible amount of intensity and energy into the classroom, evident in all of her relationships, and in her teaching of both the digital Projects class and her 9th grade general English classes. As an observer in her classroom I have been fortunate to see occasions when students engage in a kind of critical dialogue--about race, about education, about a myriad of life and societal dilemmas--that reaches levels of thought, complexity, emotionality, and generosity that are truly rare in high school and even college classrooms. On workshop/production days, however, there was less of this soaring shared inquiry, while students did their work, collaboratively or individually, making choices and doing lots of trouble-shooting while planning and producing their projects. In her passion about the work, Ms. D. could be very blunt, sometimes harsh. While she has endless patience to work with students who

have questions, or who want her help, she sometimes snapped at those who were not serious. Her flashes didn't seem to bother her students, who undoubtedly respected her, but weren't, as will become clear in later chapters, afraid of her. Complicating this academic year was the fact that Ms. D's mom, with whom she was very close, had Stage 4 cancer.

Alexander identified himself as African American; he had a father from West Africa, and a mother from Northern Europe. He was an outspoken, active participant in class discussions. He could talk circles around the rest of the class, if he chose to, and he often chose to. Alexander was an activist in the Movement for Black Lives outside of the Projects class, and he brought this determined focus into the work for the class, much of the time, but not always. He was alert to the problems facing African American youth, especially young men, in schools and on the streets. He had a relaxed relationship with his peers and with his teachers, but didn't seem to be close to anyone except perhaps another mixed race student named Felix, with whom he created and performed music, and the principal of the school. On reading Freire for the Projects class, Alexander stated: "I can't even imagine or describe a non-oppressive school. I want to, but I can't."

Ynez is a Latina student; she came to the U.S. from Mexico when she was a baby with her undocumented mother. She hadn't wanted to stay in the class, initially, because it seemed like it would be "too difficult," but Ynez, working closely with Claudia, ended up pouring herself into the production of her podcast and documentary film. Ynez felt passionate about the topic of immigration, especially the experience of coming from Mexico, and three out of five members of the film group were children of Mexican

immigrants. Ynez and Claudia really struggled with their group members in terms of getting them to come up with ideas and to follow through on the work. An astute reader of social situations, Ynez had a lot of observations about the group dynamics between herself and Absame, Rico, Nathaniel, and Claudia, which she navigated during the film project, but only talked about to Claudia (and Bailey and Hani), rather than bringing it up to her group members, or Ms. D. She thought that Ms. D. saw the dysfunction in her group: “It wasn’t like necessary for us to tell her.... she saw that for herself.” When I suggested it might be helpful to get it out in the open, she just laughed: “I can work around them.”

Selected Critical Academy Participants

Critical Academy Teacher: Ms. K. This was Ms. K.’s fourth year at CA, and her fourth year of teaching. She is a queer white woman who embraced the critical, feminist foundations of CA. She had worked with homeless youth before becoming certified to teach English-Language Arts, and in her approach to education she carried a participatory youth worker, community-organization vibe. Her demeanor is very warm, and she frequently, only a little bit in jest, told her students how lucky she was to get to spend the day with them. Ms. K. was an advocate for students, mediating between them and the administrative team; she was also a defender of freedoms, which sometimes caused trouble for her in the larger school community. Ms. K. co-taught the class with a Social Studies teacher, Ms. A., and for 5th hour, because of high numbers of students with IEPs, they had the Special Education teacher--Ms. M.--in the classroom, too. In addition, there was a full-time educational assistant in the class who was dedicated to Annie, a girl

who only made brief appearances in the class to present her work. Sometimes Annie was very cuddly with the EA, although once she became angry with her, and hit her repeatedly. At any rate, there was a high ratio of three teachers to 19 students. Despite the extra adults in the room, fifth hour was the most difficult class of the day, in terms of behavior and productivity.

Casey is a white girl who had attended many schools before landing at CA, owing to repeated moving over the years: from her mom's, to her grandma's, to her dad's, and so forth. She was attached to Ms. K., and called her "Mom." She generally made herself known through speaking loudly when everyone was finally quieted down, and swearing. (When she came back to visit as a 9th grader, Ms. K. told her "I even miss your swearing!") She got in trouble for fighting and mouthing off in some of her classes, and in the hallways. Casey was out and proud, and made her lesbian identity part of her literacy projects in the class. She saw herself as a writer, and, while professing to be shy about it, also was really pleased to have attention paid to her writing from peers, teachers, and from me. She also shared some of her work with her sister and her mom's boyfriend.

Yanna is an African American girl from a large family (she is one of 10 kids). While I had heard that Yanna's home life was difficult, even violent, she portrayed a different picture of it when she presented on the "culture" of her family, sharing some traditions. Yanna brought in a coconut cake, (what I usually think of as a German chocolate cake) for everyone to sample, and explained that in her household, Sundays are family days for eating and being at home. Yanna was making sense of the knowledge that she had been ill served in several of the four schools she had attended prior to CA. She

noted that: “Yeah, the ‘zines we got to pick a topic that was our concerning, and mine was involved with race cuz I kinda took it off from my life because I used to always get suspended even when I was in 3rd grade.” While she liked Ms. K. and the Language Arts-Social Studies class, there were “off” days Yanna when kept her head down and did very little, or became (briefly) belligerent when asked to participate.

Researcher (Anne)

My role at both sites was that of observer and participant. I took notes every day, and gathered audio, still images, and video. Some days I was so busy talking to students as part of the class that I wrote field notes later, but I purposely drew attention to the fact that I was there as a researcher who was openly curious about what was going on. I didn’t want to be considered a teacher, exactly, by the students, nor did I want to get in the way of instruction, or become a buddy to students in order to gain their confidence. This did happen, of course, as students made little side jokes to me, or, made nonverbal asides (e.g. significant eye contact), or commented directly on what someone (sometimes the teacher) did that was weird, baffling, or annoying. Both settings had more adults in the room than might be the norm, so my presence wasn’t exactly a novelty, and in this way, I was just another body who could listen, offer feedback or advice, provide snacks, or a smile or laugh. I tried not to get caught up in redirecting student behavior, although this was difficult at times and I had to remind myself not to register disapproval even with minor infractions like Indigo sitting on her phone during silent reading. The bottom line was that I endeavored to be as helpful and, failing that, at least not harmful to teachers and students, without making a big deal of it.

I had conducted a study in Ms. D.'s classroom two years before this project began, and had gotten to know her pretty well, including fairly deep knowledge of her instruction and curriculum, although these things are not fixed and certainly changed with different students, in different times. I also knew Ms. K. quite well, having met her when she was a student at the university several years prior to the time of this research; although she was never technically my student she sometimes told her students that I had been her teacher. Given my history with both teachers, I suspect my main contributions (and these were small ones) were to serve as sounding-board for them: offering ideas student behaviors, curriculum design, resources, and providing the general support of seeing their work, appreciating it as both difficult and inspired, listening to their frustrations and despair, and applauding their moments of success and joy.

Methods of Data Collection

I began collecting data immediately, in the form of field notes that I took while in the classroom. I scribbled snippets of conversation, drew maps of the room, and arrows to describe the movement of students. Later, when all of the consent and assent forms were returned, and I knew who I could record, and who I should not record, I began documenting the interactions more fully, sometimes asking if I could leave my phone at a table in order to stay out of the way while students were working on their productions. I collected an assortment of data:

1. Print data: field notes from roughly 140 hours at the high school, and 125 hours at the middle school, student work, including written reflections of their projects,

course material/hand-outs, cultural artifacts from both schools, transcriptions of audio and video data

2. Photographic data: student work for the photography unit, photos of all kinds of classroom interactions, including presentations, students working, and students not working
3. Audio: student productions for the podcast unit, audio recordings of whole class and small group discussions, audio recordings of all interviews, which were semi-structured
4. Video: student productions for the documentary film unit, video recordings of whole class and small group interactions

Data Analysis

As described above, I relied on mediated discourse analysis (MDA) to look at the actions and interactions of participants. This entailed specific use of nexus analysis (Scollon & Scollon, 2004), with attention to timescales in exploring discourses across time and place as related to classroom episodes (Chapter 4), and the use of mediated discourse analysis to interpret student productions and performances, including how images and objects changed meanings and anticipated futures through repositioning, paying attention to traversals (Lemke, 2005) across time and place (Chapter 5). Taking as data the teachers' patterns of actions—movement, words, objects--MDA was enlisted to analyze their values and relationships (Chapter 6). Gee's concept of "building things in the world" (2011) informed how I interpreted what was created and reinforced as good and worthy in the world of the classrooms. Beyond this, each data chapter includes a

short description of the data analysis methods that were used in developing and supporting the interpretation of that chapter's argument.

In general, the process of data analysis was recursive, and, in some respects, I was always engaged in analyzing what was going on, even when I was in the middle of the action. This was in part because what seemed important in the life of the classroom implied some level of implicit analysis; a sense of what was significant informed what I decided to write down as part of the field notes, and what I decided to photograph, or what audio and visual recordings I made. More explicit forms of analysis followed, with the following elements, which were not progressive, but not random, either. My work with the data entailed movement through these actions, with plenty of folding or doubling back, when called for:

1. Transcribed interviews
2. Reviewed field notes, photos, audio, video, and coded patterns, including visual patterns
3. Transcribed video and audio of noticeable interactions, owing to affective intensities, or particularly clear instances of connection or disconnection
4. Did a close "reading" of student productions, which included following thematic trajectories, tracing connections with participants' histories, and noticing the intertextual development from the work of other members of the class
5. Created a list of themes. Some of these were exuberance/exhilaration, strong expressions of emotion/intensities (including discomfort), descriptions of pride or pleasure in a literacy production, actions that showed care, movement of bodies,

physical proximity, words/discourses connected to bodies, registers of anger or resistance, evidence of intersection of different timescales, words and actions that indicate changed perspectives

6. Conducted a closer analysis of all data connected to themes, returning to the data they emerged from to look for refutation and corroboration.
7. Explored theories about how students or teachers might be making something new happen in their classrooms or lives (considering how and if there were moments of transformation)
8. Checked some of this theorizing with focal students and both teachers (quasi-member check)

Ethical Considerations

A few things seem important to discuss here connected to the telling of someone else's story. First, I end up telling stories *about* my participants, and although I talked with them a lot, I was theorizing based on what they said and what they did, and ultimately, creating a record of the findings. This meant different things depending on the position of the participants: teacher or student. For the two teachers, who graciously opened their classrooms, it meant having all kinds of things about their practice, such as curriculum, relationships, and teaching style, subjected to some very hard questions about what it means to teach, why we do it, and what good and what damage might occur as a result. For the students, it meant that after scrutinizing their words and productions, I might inadvertently "hear music that doesn't exist" (Geertz, 1988, p. 10), or repackage or "reframe their outrage" (Fine, 1994, p. 73). In fact, I do intend to view any outrage as

something valuable, hopefully without taking it and muting it in any way. This becomes further complicated owing to my identity as a white researcher, formerly a white teacher, talking with and thinking about the experiences of white teachers and students of color. The last thing I want to do is to make claims about experiences of those who are routinely “othered” by racial categories, which is why I discussed and re-asked some of the interview questions after a significant amount of time had passed, when the participants were long past their stint as students in the class.

What I can do about these concerns is avoid reporting my findings as inert facts. I hope they retain the sense of possibility and movement that I found in the actions and voices of the people in these places.

Second, I end up telling stories about myself, both in explicit narratives about the impetus for this work, and in omissions throughout the written record of the study. What I say is such a small, pinched-off part of the 100+ hours spent in each of these classrooms, and while I know I didn’t make decisions lightly about what to include and what to leave out, there are ways that I might be writing myself out of the narrative. This is not to communicate an excess of caution, but I want to keep the question out there: to what extent am I “shadowing” (Fine, 1994) myself in this telling? In fact, I *was* deeply immersed in the cultures, but since I didn’t feel exactly like an insider, it’s as if I was watching myself along with everything/everyone else the whole time, and just not finding my actions terribly noteworthy.

In describing where and when social change is being insisted upon, and in thinking about it as something connected to a powerful motivator: love, I hope that I

don't candy-coat the difficulties, whenever and however they arose, including the hope that I don't attempt to "protect" the teachers, who, as strong educators, definitely don't need such a gesture. As I noted in Ch. 1, my obsession with love comes out of my own very real struggles, and my own desire to see instances of and imagine more possibilities for schools that do not subjugate students.

Limitations of the Study

In not conducting a phenomenological study--which I would be curious about doing, in the future--I might reasonably consider a limitation of the project to be that I didn't want to ask the teachers or students to talk about love. Finding it to be an overly laden term, I doubted that asking my participants about love would show me what love did, and what it made possible, in these classrooms. I might be wrong about this, and I hope to conduct a wide-ranging study, across more settings, with a more diverse group of teachers, that asks the question directly: how is teaching connected with love, or something like that.

I have to mention the possibility that my question could be wrong. This limitation was inspired by Becker's sociological research on how one can "reason from cases" (2014). Anyone who has spent time in schools has probably encountered jaded teachers (a small but reliable percentage of the profession) who say caustic things about students and their families in the teacher's lunchroom, or they "help" new teachers by saying "Don't smile until Thanksgiving" or they complain that kids these days don't want to learn, and so forth, spreading a gospel of negativity in schools. Their remarks and beliefs go beyond the gallows humor that might provide necessary relief from a difficult job,

with difficult conditions. I knew these teachers as a student, I knew them as colleagues when I was teaching, and I have known them as mentor/cooperating teachers in my work in teacher education. Becker's question began with a study of jazz musicians and then, through his logic--reasoning from cases--it was applied to nurses. It would be applied to teachers thusly: Why do teachers hate their students? For the most part, I doubt this to be true. Like Yanay (2012), I tend to think that "hate" isn't the opposite of love. The opposite of love would be not caring, some form of disregard. Hate might be an expression of extreme frustration, especially likely when social actors care very much. Therefore, teachers *do* hate their students, at least some of the time, and because this is a warping of care, I don't consider it to be a limitation, after all.

In remaining focused on what I saw, heard, and asked about, I stayed in the realm of qualitative interpretation. All caveats aside, I'm thrilled with the themes that emerged based on repeated patterns of action, talk, and aesthetic and critical productions.

Chapter 4

Cosmopolitan Desire: Connecting with “Others”

Wind rushes
Over the dunes,
And the coarse, salt-crusted grass
Answers.

Heu,
It whips round my ankles!

(H.D.)

Cosmopolitanism

I discussed cosmopolitanism as part of the genealogy of love (Chapter 2), but in order to understand how it functioned in the classrooms in this study, I want look more closely at the concept. Cosmopolitanism is not a new concept, and it is not a fixed one. The philosophy's origins reach back to Stoicism (before 300 BCE), and continue to beguile with promises of harmony across cultural and political differences. Kant, in fact, thought that a cosmopolitan orientation held the key to “perpetual peace” (1795) because everyone, well, whoever everyone was for Kant, would eventually do away with national and ethnic borders and become citizens of the world. This level of global citizenship is obviously problematic in that it seeks to erase that which cannot be erased: histories of lived and learned connections to some groups and lived and learned distrust of others. The current appeal and reemergence of cosmopolitanism lies in the optimistic possibility that in addition to, and alongside, our deep allegiances to families, neighborhoods, towns, regions, countries, religions, linguistic groups, and so forth, there are ways to connect

across difference, and there are good reasons to try to make these transcultural connections. Further, in spite of justified reservations about such an old-fashioned construct as universal humanity, cosmopolitanism suggests that our ability to connect with and across differences might be at least as substantial as our lack of connection (Appiah, 2006).

To make such a connection, individuals must adopt an orientation toward the other that is open, a stance that might range from Kant's (1795) brand of high cosmopolitanism espousing "universal hospitality" to the other, to something more tempered, what Hansen (2009) calls a "receptivity to the new, and reflective loyalty to the known" (p. 1). Maintaining this loyalty to the home culture and experience, and simultaneously being available to the strange and the stranger is often referred to as "rooted" or "grounded" cosmopolitanism (Campano, 2011; Guarnizo & Smith, 1998; Hansen, 2009; Juzwik & McKenzie, 2015).

Sociocultural theory suggests that there is no other realistic approach to interacting in the world: how can we do anything but carry with us our bodies as lived in and through multiple cultures? Emerging from particular locales and positions to enact dynamic and particular identities, including but not limited to such things as gender and race, even the most global citizens must retain a "sense of the local" (Hansen, 2010, p. 5). In this construction, all encounters with difference might be regarded as incursions into another's air space, in which a local--someone with ties to a certain cultural group, identity, history, geography--meets an/other local, a "stranger," with ties to other groups, identities, experiences, geographies, in what is referred to as a *translocal*, experience

(Brickell & Datta, 2011; Guarnizo & Smith, 1998). For the purposes of this discussion, the term cosmopolitanism will be used to denote the translocal sense of the concept, in recognition that we cannot help but participate as locals, with other, different locals, even as we attempt to connect with strangers.

Cosmopolitanism and connections to learning

An encounter with difference, broadly, is also what must happen in order to learn anything. The learner has to stretch to admit a new “truth,” an understanding or perspective, while still holding onto and deciding what to do about older knowledge. The new thought can mingle with and build upon, or sometimes supplant, the older idea, allowing for what Dewey saw as one of our main human strengths: the potential for growth (2011 [1916]). At a basic level, then, cosmopolitanism has a relationship to learning, if we are talking about the kind of learning that involves new thought, rather than memorization.

We see this same structure of loyalty to the known with receptivity to the new replicated in Dewey’s theory of communication, his contention that all communication was educative, since all parties in the give and take of “true” communicative sharing are “enlarged and changed” by the experience (2011 [1916], p. 7). Similarly, we can locate the structure in Freire’s development of dialogue as speaking a “true word” with at least one other person, since “no one can say a true word alone” (Freire, 1996, p. 69). As with Dewey’s “true communication,” the give and take of Freirean dialogue is linked with what it means to be human, remembering that he saw it as an “existential necessity” (Freire, 1996, p. 115). Thus, cosmopolitanism has ready parallels in the actions of

communication and dialogue, while adding an aspiration that there will be some goodness in maintaining, always dynamically, a loyalty to the known--including such known and felt experiences involving bodies (raced, gendered, and otherwise imprinted and marked) by cultures, languages, and places--while offering openness to the unknown, the new, the strange, the other.

It shouldn't surprise us, then, that dialogue as a demonstration of rooted cosmopolitanism offers potential for literacy learning, found in the development of a "cosmopolitan-minded writing pedagogy" (Juzwik & McKenzie, 2015), the "cosmopolitan literacies" of youth in their interactions with a far-flung global audience through digital media and social networks (Hull & Stornaiuolo, 2015), and the use of literacy to draw youth toward participatory global citizenship (Schultz, Vasudevan, & Throop, 2007), to name a few. This research emphasizes the many ways that cosmopolitanism intersects with and encourages relevant literacy learning, making the point that we may find ourselves in a time with unique calls for cosmopolitanism, considering the ease with which we can communicate across vast distances, and the current migrations of many of the world's populations owing to the intersecting impacts on survival from climate, commerce/globalization, and war.

More related to my study is the notion that a cosmopolitan orientation places value on the *quality* of these communications or dialogues across difference. It isn't enough to meet the other, but there must ideally be some moments of "meaningful engagement" (Wahlstrom, 2011), or "meaningful interaction" (Hansen, 2009) across difference, something akin to Dewey's idea that a "full and free" interplay between

“groups” is a requirement of educating for democratic societies (2011). In approaching their role in creating or supporting democratic societies, then, how do schools set up conditions for “full and free” communication across different groups? Here the most diverse schools have a leg up on the circumstances needed for cosmopolitan encounters. Such schools and the classrooms within them are literal and metaphorical crossroads, a junction or meeting place between worlds.

School as crossroads

When students spend their days in diverse schools, they are learning and working in what we might think of as a crossroads, a public meeting space where people regularly talk about matters of significance with people who are not like them. Indeed, there are few places that compare to schools in the way of non-market, face-to-face interaction and connection among and between people who come from different cultural, social, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. While it might also be useful to describe diverse classrooms as borderlands, to capture the sense of the fluidity in meeting and interacting across cultures, “borderlands” (Anzaldua, 2012) connotes a liminality that may not be part of the feeling of everyday classrooms; thus, the image of the crossroads is apt for my discussion.

Students attending these schools travelled across a large urban area from home to school and back again, frequently moving from segregated neighborhoods to be together in their classrooms: collections of affluent, less affluent, and economically insecure students, of Latinx, African American, East African, White-European, and Asian American students, and equally important, of confident, outspoken, self-satisfied, reserved, unsung, exhausted, beloved, and actively disliked (to name some extremes) students converged in

classrooms where they were pressed to value, learn from, and come to know each other as equals. Where else is this the demand made of us?

Such complicated classrooms may be conceptualized as cosmopolitan spaces, and students—especially those who traverse multiple cultures, languages, and geographic distances--as cosmopolitan intellectuals (Campano, 2011; Crampton, Lewis, & Tierney, 2017; Wahlstrom, 2011; Zaidi & Rowsell, 2017). Students and their teachers are generally gathered together in small physical spaces, where relationships of one kind or another develop over many hours, days, weeks, months, and sometimes years. The proximity is not a guarantee that everyone will look at each other, and less that everyone will notice and see and interact and become cordial acquaintances and even friends with each other, although that might be a fond wish of most teachers. No, the classroom is set up for interactions, even collaboration, but encounters with people outside of their known social groups often feel uncomfortable for students, and the conversations therefore might stay at a certain level of remove.

This discomfort is not limited to students, of course, but adults often become more adept at pretending their way through such encounters. I think back to my youthful memories of attending church, and that moment when you are supposed to turn to your neighbor, shake hands, and say “Peace be with you.” I wanted that to feel comfortable, but it was awkward, and I didn’t like awkward things. I didn’t want to prolong that moment of contact, despite the fact that following a scripted statement--“and also with you”—ensured a high likelihood of doing the exchange correctly. In the social setting of school, there is no script for students to follow, although there are preferred, and by 12th

grade, often default types of interactions, suggested registers and orders of exchange that have become routinized. These communications across difference fall into the “business as usual” category of classroom talk, and, while not terrible, it probably doesn’t include “true words” or “meaningful” engagement. For this reason and more, there are as many opportunities for doing an exchange awkwardly, even incorrectly, as there are for consequential moments of connection to occur.

Proper Distance

I will contradict myself here, because while I have been referring to cosmopolitanism as orientation or stance, it is not static. Rather, it is associated with an action, a doing. It isn’t something that automatically happens when people are placed in cosmopolitan spaces. The action of connecting across difference occurs, as implied in the discussion above, because one person calls or gets the attention of an/other in some way, leading to an interaction that is a “negotiation between the familiar and the strange” (Silverstone, 2003, p. 172). Entering dialogue with an/other might look and feel a thousand different ways. Perhaps it’s as small as a half-smile, or a narrowing of eyes, or a pursing of lips. Perhaps it’s a request to hear more, or an appreciation, or maybe it’s a touch on the other’s arm. The variability of the encounter shows that interpretation and calibration is entailed in the back and forth as one or both participants move closer to each other, figuratively or in real space and time. The distance between self and stranger demonstrates greater and lesser degrees of hospitality, although, thinking back to Kant’s idea, there is no requirement for students, at least, to extend a “universal hospitality” to each other (there is, however, a demand that teachers strive for this more utopian

approach to hospitality). Such openness would make students vulnerable in the extreme, given the differential power relationships in classrooms owing to previous experiences with school, including factors such as culture, race, gender, friendship groups or cliques. Hospitality has degrees of closeness and distance that change depending on the situation. This position between self and other is a sort of theoretical sweet spot referred to as “proper distance” (Silverstone, 2003; 2007)

What is meant by proper distance? To develop the idea, Silverstone drew on Levinas (1969), who talked about how communication entailed contact between the self and another. Dramatizing the contact, Levinas pictured the self as coming close enough to *see* the face of the stranger, creating a moment of extreme vulnerability for the other. When a stranger’s face is presented or offered, its openness or nakedness conveys the message: “Do not kill me,” which Levinas viewed as a summons, something that would elicit a response. Levinas then established the understanding that the other (despite the presentation of such vulnerability and openness) was basically incomprehensible, an “infinity” as Levinas said (1969), something beyond us that we cannot grasp, that “resists . . . possession” even as we are engaged in a relationship together (p. 197). The resistance of the other to being fully known is, in fact, what motivates communication; if we were all one, there would be nobody to talk to. Communication across difference, then, encompasses exposure, protection, the desire to understand, and the impossibility of this understanding. Proper distance acknowledges these competing forces, by suggesting that participants be close enough to care, but not so close that they are “indistinguishable” from each other, far enough away to observe the differences between them, the otherness

of the other's experience, but not so far away that they become "beyond humanity" (Silverstone, 2003, p. 172).

Proper distance is a helpful concept when thinking about dialogue across difference, but it is important to point out that attention to proximity and distance is not observed equally. Given that social, structural, and institutional powers function as active and shifting components of all relationships, it should not be surprising that those most attendant to proximity and distance are those who have been hurt in some way by the ruthlessness of their social others, through historic and lived experiences of dehumanization. Indeed, Levinas's encounter with the face only happens if one truly tries to perceive, or makes an effort to understand the face that is being presented, with the deep acknowledgement that there is no such thing as one's authentic face, but rather, there is an *aspect* of self that is offered, and felt, in that moment. There are many shortcuts to connection, such as stereotypes, leaving those with more clout to feel satisfied with a weak grasp of the other's truths. Further, proper distance could be violated through undeserved or seized intimacy, or it could be increased to levels of complete non-contact, in the kind of "thoroughgoing ignorance" which Appiah (2006) warns is a "privilege of the powerful" (p. xviii). Indeed, it is likely that those in less powerful positions tend to be greater students of their social others, for reasons of repeated exposure (being subjected to listen to the other as part of dominant culture), and in order to anticipate and survive in unsafe situations.

So it is that while interactions across difference are possible in cosmopolitan classrooms, there are many solid reasons why the summons and command of an/other

might be swept aside, aborted, or not ventured at all. The most routine types of classroom interactions between socially separate groups tend to be businesslike. Perhaps the teacher talks a great deal, in which case students are able to sit comfortably with little expectation of interaction. Or, perhaps the class requires collaborative learning, or “group work,” for which students might be assigned roles, to complete a task to greater and lesser degrees of success in the eyes of their teacher. In dialogic classrooms, of course, the goal is for sustained interaction among students, opportunities to direct the talk, and to create meaning and new knowledge through talk (Juzwik et al, 2012; Nystrand, 1997), getting back to the idea of scripted versus unscripted contacts with the other. Unscripted classroom dialogue has many more opportunities for meaning, and meaning making, but it is undoubtedly more risky. Certainly, it would be irresponsible to view contact or collisions with racial, cultural, social others as the only kinds of interactions to be cultivated and valued in schools and classrooms. There is undoubtedly a need to balance comfort among one’s social familiars with the thrill of exposure to “strangers,” as Fine, Weis, & Powell (1997) suggested, a “flight into sameness by a marginalized group may be essential for and not a distraction from integration” (p. 275).

To bring this back to the ideals of cosmopolitanism, naively optimistic though they may, at times, appear, talking with diverse others is not comfortable, it is complicated, and yet we scarcely need reminding that “the need for civic . . . dialogue in schools has never been more urgent” (Juzwik et al, 2012, p. 8). The willingness to decrease the distance is, in fact, a moral and ethical position (Bauman, 1993; Levinas, 1969). In fact, we can see the moral and ethical argument playing out in a school setting,

with the vague sense that cooperation is a virtue, and that cooperative children are good children. While there *is* a logical argument about how caring for the stranger is a social good, when negotiations between familiar and strange are viewed as moral actions, we might miss what it feels like in the moment-to-moment experience of jumping into the space (sometimes a gulf) that exists between self and other.

Cosmopolitan desire

I have stated that it may be reasonable to maintain a chilly distance across assorted social (cultural, racial, gender) groups in diverse classrooms. However, my data suggests that, against such reason, there is an emergent desire for our other(s) that works to bridge the distance, allowing for transformations in relationships and learning experiences with peers that are quite profound. The desire for connection with social others can be seen as an enactment of Derrida's (1994) contemplation on friendship (mentioned in Chapter 2), a reflection on a line attributed to Aristotle, by way of Montaigne: "Oh my friends, there is no friend." The crux of this statement is the impossibility of simultaneously addressing a friend (Oh, my friends), while acknowledging that meeting the other, the not-me, is a risky encounter (there is no friend), demonstrating that an element of faith is involved following an assessment of what could go wrong. The impossibility of friendship, per Derrida, recalls Levinas's idea that the exposure is both a summons and a command: Here I am. Do not kill me. I am suggesting that the exposure, or presentation of vulnerability (Levinas's "face"), activates a momentary, almost wild, desire to come into contact with an/other. It is a particular kind of love, this desire, a relationship with someone that we have no real claim on, as

family. Levinas talked about how realizing the essential unknowability of the other, despite simultaneously *wanting* to know and understand the other, created a desire for the other. He described this desire as an overflowing, a “surplus,” the recognition of which offered potential for a “glorious humility, responsibility, and sacrifice, which are the conditions for equality itself” (1969, p. 64) as the subject lets the vulnerability of an/other illuminate the vulnerability in the self.

Through this vulnerability, the space between the self and other becomes less proper. It might result in a new proximity, eventually becoming a new norm of proper distance, but at the first contact, which may even resemble a collision, closing the gap between self and other is uncomfortable and awkward. And, it is often intensely pleasurable, once accomplished. We might imagine a kind of makeshift, improvised spanner, such as the use of a rock or a log when crossing a stream. Once at the other side of the crossing, there is a triumphant feeling in having made it past a shaky spot. In opening the self to the other, we touch and have the capacity to be touched in ways that are both thrilling and terrifying. Here the felt, embodied quality of the contact (thrill/terror) fills up Spinoza’s theory of affect (2002 [1677]): that we affect and are affected, and are changed by the experience.

Situated at the classroom-as-crossroads in both settings, I wondered about how students entered and exited a meaningful encounter with their others. What did it feel like for students who took up the challenge to connect across difference, whether they were obligated to do so through the curriculum, or were volunteer connectors? As in H.D.’s poem, the crossroads is a meeting place of different *ways*—with ways understood as the

roads or routes, and also ways as modes or manners of being in the world—and it’s a bit precarious; when the wind whips the sea grass onto the speaker’s ankles, the cry of “heu!” is equal parts surprise and delight. So, too, do the moments of profound interaction with others elicit shivers of fear and pleasure, at once, for certain students in these classes. Both sites in the study suggested that situations that allowed students to risk a rather full and uncomfortable exposure to the other resulted in *frissons* of intense feeling, satisfaction, and often, exhilaration, especially post-contact. This sort of contact was emotionally expressive, as observed from behaviors and gestures, and in words. It was not experienced as a typical interaction. The heightened intensity (Massumi, 2015) of this affective experience, while somewhat outside of language due to its embodied, felt quality, might be similar to what Noddings referred to as “joy” in being open to the other. Such openness led to a brief (“momentary”) feeling of overwhelming and “joyful oneness” with this other entity (Noddings, 2013).

Intensity of feeling—joy, or something else—through the “meaningful” (emotional, personal, critical) entrance into the space between self and social others, is what I am naming “cosmopolitan desire.” Cosmopolitan desire, once experienced, shifts the distance between “strangers,” recalibrating possibly for a new closeness, or at least a memory of closeness for future encounters. It might be thought of as what happens prior to feelings of “belonging” (Vasudevan, 2014), because the entrance into a different kind of relationship and connection has not settled on comfort, although there may be hints at closeness in the “glimpses of something familiar in the texts, practices, and language of someone altogether different” (Vasudevan, 2014, p. 54).

Perhaps, in ways more complicated than Noddings laid out, there is something of Barthes' "jouissance" in this contact with the other, in light of his insistence that the experience of feeling the gap between signifier and signified was a complicated and emotional one. While the known thing (in Barthes' case, the signifier or word) points to an unknown thing (the signified idea), the signifier can never truly capture the concept; there will always be a gap in knowing. This gap, the inability to name that which is outside of our understanding or consciousness, is the most motivating, most troubling and exciting type of interaction. It is, in fact, equated with an orgasm, but maybe it is closer to the point directly before the climax, since all of the motivation is still present: "is not the most erotic portion of the body where the garment gapes?" (Barthes, 1975, p. 9). Barthes was ostensibly talking about language and experiences with multi-voiced texts that resist interpretation, rather than people and bodies, in translocal meetings, but it is possible to ask this construct to help capture the intensity of cosmopolitan desire.

Cosmopolitan desire is similarly stirring, and, following Barthes, it is a bit improper. It tends to involve bodies, although it might occur virtually. In summary, several things can occur simultaneously when self and other are in contact, informing the experience of the action in a dynamic cosmopolitan space: a desire for the other is expressed through realizing that the other is not knowable, but wanting to know anyway, coupled with fear and excitement in divulging something about the self, and, later, satisfaction that both parties might be changed by the contact.

Methodologies: Mapping Cosmopolitan Desire

Critical Ethnography as Dialogue

In order to map cosmopolitan desire, I draw from one classroom event, taken from the larger ethnographic study in two schools. While I entered these classrooms with questions about love, it was only through careful combing of field notes, interview transcripts, audio and video recordings of small and large group interactions, and student work, that I located patterns in the context and aftermath of intense displays of emotion, and began marking these as instances containing both discomfort and pleasure in connecting with the stranger, or social other. The case for this chapter is used as illustrative of the experience; the student in question wasn't exactly typical, but she wasn't atypical. There were many others who had similar experiences, and some of their reflections are presented later in this chapter (pgs. 136-37).

In describing a moment of vulnerability in the life of the classroom, and in the life of this one student, I aim to approach the words and actions from this episode with the appropriate level of respect, as well as holding out the distinct possibility that I'm being presumptuous in my interpretation. I hope to learn something about the situation, and the social actors involved, "not by making [them] into a field of observation, a set of data or a tool of doctrine," and with a staunch "refus[al] to know everything" about them (Bauman & Donskis, 2013, p. 213). To avoid being flat-out wrong, I have checked these ideas with the student, even after finding enormous corroboration in two prior interviews with her, several of her written reflections, my own observations, and two interviews with the teacher. In continually engaging with the data and the participants in this way, I hope to convey my own participation in constructing knowledge as a dialogue between the self and the other, a concept that is significant to my thinking about the complexity of

dialogue and the importance of it, not as the end in itself, but as a necessary part of being alive and participating in the world of ideas, and obviously, with our others.

Mediated discourse analysis

The use of mediated discourse analysis (MDA) to look more closely at a classroom event is appropriate here, at the most basic level, in making prominent the links between what came before and what comes after a particular action, in a particular moment. As discussed and explained in Chapter 3, MDA considers the ways that setting, people, stories, ideas, beliefs, histories, and all kinds of objects influence, directly or indirectly, whatever is happening, together forming a “nexus of practice” (Scollon & Scollon, 2004). All of these factors are thought to “mediate” the action, influencing and shaping what comes next through implicit and explicit reference to “social structures, histories, and ideologies” (Jones & Norris, 2005, p. 50). As an example, a classroom with the desks lined up in rows presents a certain message to students; it carries the expectation that work will be undertaken independently, for one. It might also evoke memories of other experiences, such as a test, or “this is what the room looks like when we do sustained silent reading.” Further, the arrangement, if typical in a classroom, might also convey an institutional preference for order, the preservation of the teacher’s authority. Thus, the desks in the classroom may be read as mediational means. In the episode under review, the regular English and Social Studies classrooms had been supplanted for three days by the black box theater classroom, an intimate, semi-formal performance space that mediated the action of the presentations by making the occasion feel special, and by focusing attention on the speaker.

MDA is useful because it does more than offer a structure for exploring the multiple parts of a complex moment. It moves to the question of what is made possible as a result of the mediated action, asking what changes for the people or social actors involved. I am stating up front that I want to know about meaningful connections between people, especially students, who feel their social and cultural differences strongly, because it's important at both personal and societal levels. MDA places a demand on research to keep central the possibility for the transformation of signs, or "resemiotizing" that might "alter ... historical trajectories in some way (Scollon & Scollon, 2004, p. 8), making a goal toward more inclusivity and positive social change.

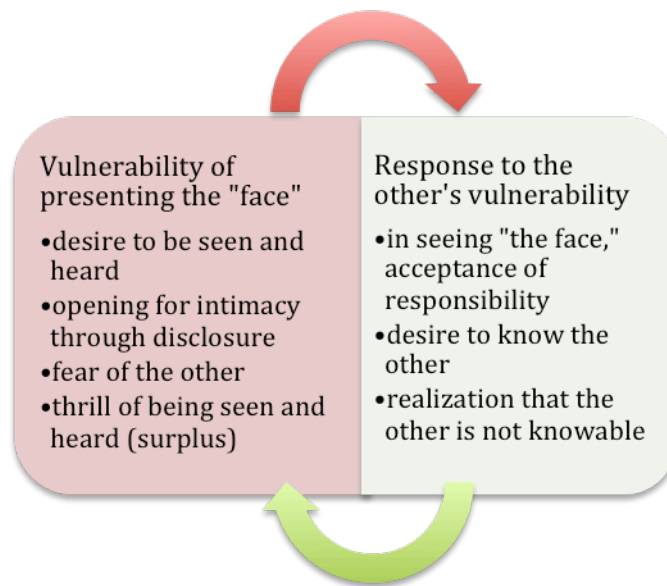
This chapter uses MDA to describe and interpret the discourses in place that were in play in the episode, which might be referred to as the site of engagement. These discourses include the physical space, the physical, intellectual, and emotional requirements of the assignment, and the conceptual tools, or the big "D" discourses (Gee, 2011) in the classroom around social justice and challenging the status quo. While I focused on one moment within the episode, I looked across timescales to notice how histories of the social actors were present in the event, and how their trajectories were subsequently transformed through the mediated action.

Cosmopolitan Desire

The simultaneous features of cosmopolitan desire will be used to further explore the episode itself. In doing this, I'm trying to slow down to describe the moment of connection across difference, to artificially pull it "out of time" almost, suspending

something that is actually in motion. The following figure (Figure 2) offers a tool for naming the parts of cosmopolitan desire:

Figure 2: Features of Cosmopolitan Desire



Vulnerable Literacies: Ynez's Speech

Timescales

To discuss an event or episode, we can't ignore what came before it, or what happened next. This investigation across time takes into account that there are variations in the layers of timescales and/or rhythmic cycles that are linked in the action of any given event (Lemke, 2005; Scollon, 2005). These layers are offered in a table (*Table 3*) based on Scollon & Scollon's work (2004, p. 25-26) as a reminder that events aren't strung along like beads on a necklace, but are part of multiple interlocking and overlapping and sometimes conflicting longer and shorter stories. In the interest of

clarity, there was an event that happened in a place and time, a speech performed about one month into the school year in the Projects class at the Midtown site. The students—all seniors—were assigned the now-ubiquitous *This I Believe* essay, and asked to deliver their ideas in the form of a speech presented with original photographs. This analysis looks closely at the experience of a social actor, a focal student named Ynez. The table below previews the discussion to follow.

Table 3

Timescales for Ynez’s episode (categories based on Scollon & Scollon, 2004)

Historic	History and culture of the genre – internationally and locally	<i>This I Believe</i> ’s origin (1951) and current popularity Within the classroom culture, the <i>T.I.B.</i> performance had developed into a ritual, with the extemporaneous speech and slideshow placing emphasis on authenticity, courage, vulnerability, and community building
Lifespan	Biographic/ lifespan	Ynez described this vulnerable literacy experience as new for her, referring back to her previous schooling. She placed it in context of all of the years up until this point in her educational life. The <i>T.I.B.</i> presentation became a kind of vessel for Ynez’s life up until this time, since the topic of her speech spanned across so many years of her existence
Solar (roughly)	School year	The rest of the academic year was profoundly affected by the event, arguably changing Ynez’s trajectory in the way she saw herself in multiple different communities within the school (as an English and Social Studies student, as a member of the Latinx community, as an activist in a Latinx student organization, with the AVID community, and as mentor to 9 th graders, etc.).
Lunar	Month-long project	The <i>T.I.B.</i> unit was the first of the year. Its position in the Projects class was designed to help students get to know each other through the process of creating the essay and slideshow, culminating in the performance. Ynez’s history of participation in the Projects class prior to the speech performance offers both starting points and context for emerging relationship and thematic interests
Circadian-Cardiac/Res	Event	The class period of <i>T.I.B.</i> presentations was an event; the multi-day presentations we can think of as a string of events
	Episode	Ynez’s turn at speaking and standing in front the group with her slideshow projected behind her was a bounded episode of vulnerability/exposure

	Exchange	Ynez knew that her audience was with her, so in this way the speech wasn't one-sided, especially since the audience was expected to offer some feedback post-speech
	Utterance	Ynez's speech was technically a monologue, because no one interrupted her. However, because of the audience's presence, she experienced it more as an exchange or dialogic interaction (see "exchange")

The Classroom Scene: Discourses in Place

Discourses in the classroom. From the first day of class, there was the sense that the Projects class would be a different kind of learning experience. Rooted in critical literacy, most of the projects were designed with the goal of disrupting the status quo in some way through identifying and exploring a social issue, and creating a call to action in response to it in the form of a digital production. To do this, students needed to engage in sustained, in-depth, collaborative work with partners and small groups. Further, there was a requirement of "authenticity" as a quality that was built into the assignments, both small and large, a demand that students would tap into and share things that were variously described on the syllabus as "real," "true," "powerful," and "meaningful" as they tried to figure out what mattered to them. Students were going to be asked to open up and share personal stories and beliefs with classmates, and more than a few of them wanted to transfer out when they understood this.

[D]iscourse of Cosmopolitanism. The teachers of the Projects class did not promote the concept of cosmopolitanism overtly, but there were many aspects of the course that fit the ideals of cosmopolitanism, making it a value, a "Big D" discourse for the class overall (Gee, 2011, p. 180). First, the cosmopolitan is supposed to develop a fellow feeling for the other or the stranger, a stance of hospitality. There were ample

opportunities for welcoming social others in this class, since many members of the class didn't know each other prior to their enrollment, and they truly came from different backgrounds. As noted earlier, the social and cultural make-up of the students for Projects was diverse. These youth were positioned to connect with each other, through meaningful and extended collaborations. In frequent shared inquiry discussion about common texts, including critical listening and viewing of podcasts and films, they practiced how to tackle important issues across differing opinions, religions, and values. When it came to forming working groups for the collaborative projects, there were many "mixed" cultural and social groups, although certainly there were some configurations that were established within previous affiliations, and alliances. The teachers did not manage how groups came together, unless students had difficulties in joining forces; in fact, the teachers wanted the students to feel secure and were careful to allow friends to work or sit together as desired. Ms. D. was conflicted about the best ways to "build community," as she framed it:

How do you ... help kids, reach out, and build community? I think it has to be somewhat natural. It's easier to be vulnerable if you have a friend with you. I've always struggled as a teacher between, with this idea of forcing, how do you force people to talk? Who are shy, or reticent to talk, or whatever their reasons are, and like create community? I don't know how to do that well. (Interview transcript)

In spite of her expressed doubts, Ms. D.'s thoughtfulness and concern for the well being of her students, and recognition that bringing them together was not a simple matter demonstrated her commitment to, and elevation of community as a worthy objective.

That she saw it as part of her role as a teacher, that she valued it, but “struggled” with “forcing” it to happen affirms the significance and difficulty inherent in such work. Further, Ms. D.’s linking of *community* with *talk* and *vulnerability* is significant, as well, creating a discursive connection between these abstract concepts. These comments, along with her ongoing actions with students, illustrate a desire for connections across difference to be meaningful ones, a desire that is in keeping with cosmopolitan goals. The goal of cosmopolitanism at points became elided with the ideals of multiculturalism and humanism, which, as noted earlier (Ahmed, 2004), can be used to require students to conform to white, liberal, progressive notions of unified selfhood that places value on difference, but demands that this difference be shared, in a command performance of vulnerability. I leave this dilemma unresolved, as it remained throughout the semester and beyond.

Second, the curriculum for the class underscored the cosmopolitan ideal of being a citizen-of-the-world, that our commitments to local causes and affiliations have larger ramifications. This sense of “high” cosmopolitanism (e.g. Kant, Nussbaum)—the goal of recognizing and belonging to a common or universal humanity—was made explicit in two of the guiding questions for the first quarter: “How do authors/artists connect their personal beliefs to universal meanings? How does art function to communicate personal history as well as document our shared human history? Does the belief you’ve chosen have a universal meaning? Will others be able to connect to your ideas?” Each of these questions demands that students consider their own lived experience within the enormous context of all humans, and that there is such a thing as a universal meaning, a one-ness.

These contentions can be soundly critiqued as flattening struggle, and ignoring oppressive structures--the same critiques that have been levied at high cosmopolitanism (Hansen, 2009; Strand, 2010)--but they certainly flag the assignment, and the voice of authority (the teachers) in this setting as cosmopolitan.

This I Believe Unit

History of a cosmopolitan genre. Fitting with the explicit Discourses for the Projects course, the first major project of the school year--a *This I Believe (T.I.B.)* essay--espoused cosmopolitan ideals. The genre's historic and cultural tentacles, spanning multiple generations, are outlined in promotional materials for the *T.I.B.* nonprofit organization. Originally conceived of in 1951 by Edward R. Murrow, *T.I.B.* re-emerged and became popular again through a public radio program that aired from 2005-2009 (*T.I.B.* website). There is now a repository of many thousands of possible topics and a bank of 125,000+ archived essays on the *T.I.B.* website. *T.I.B.* holds a commitment to sharing "public dialogue about belief," with a core assumption that people around the world have deeply held beliefs--but not agreements--about such universal themes as "forgiveness," "brotherhood and friendship," and "self-determination." Through this public dialogue, participants are supposed to develop "respect for beliefs different from their own" (*T.I.B.* website). Further marking it as cosmopolitan project, this format is frequently assigned in classrooms not just all over the United States, but also in schools and civic groups around the world.

Genre of *T.I.B.* within the class. The genre was executed a bit differently in the Projects class. On the timescale of a month-long project, the *This I Believe* performance

event came at the end of a larger sequence of events. Prior to the public sharing, the class took several weeks to learn about photography techniques and explore the genre of *T.I.B.* speeches while crafting their own multimodal projects and essay. The highest category of achievement on the rubric asked that the slideshow be “thoughtfully prepared,” “original,” and “visually poignant,” among many other qualities. The essay was to be shared in the form of a speech that was extemporaneously delivered, rather than read or memorized, while their photos were projected behind them.

Assignment as mediational means. The *T.I.B.* speech, as noted, was the first summative assessment for the course. Public speaking is difficult for many people (it’s one of the “top” phobias, after all), and students said they felt nervous about this presentation in advance. Some said they couldn’t sleep the night before, and all were relieved when they finished. The combined performance of speech and images was climactic for students, who seemed surprised when the act of delivering the speech in front of an audience of their peers unleashed a surplus of emotions. The surplus was less surprising for the teachers, who acknowledged the likelihood of this occurrence by offering Kleenex to students prior to the commencement of speeches.

The formality of the performance space added a layer of affective intensity. There was no way of escaping the eyes of the audience, or minimizing the fact that it was your “turn” to share. Each student was required to present or perform the speech to the combined class (42 students) in an intimate theater space, a “black box.” It was possible to make the room completely dark, no windows, and the floors, ceiling, and walls were all painted black. A spotlight illuminated the speaker, who stood, or sat on a stool, at the

center, with the audience surrounding the performance space turned their bodies and eyes toward the performer, mostly staying off of their phones to give their full attention. Ms. L, the Social Studies teacher, was the only person seated near the performer, since she was managing the flow of slides at the side of the stage, while the rest of audience occupied the amphitheater-style seating.

Normed pressure for vulnerability as mediational means. The assignment also had an expectation that students would offer something “true,” “relevant,” and “powerful” (all words from the assignment description and rubric about the essay and speech). This expectation may be viewed as a cultural tool that heightened the intensity of the performances, creating a norm in the class for students to share something personal, and consequential, about their lives. Of course, the rubric also made the assumption that there was an internal nugget of self that was unified, rather than emphasizing the concept that students would certainly have available to them multiple ways of enacting their identities, pulling from their multiple affiliations and discourses. Students made use of these multiple and intersecting identities, however, even if they did not explicitly refer to their decisions about what they chose to expose in presenting themselves to the group. Indeed, they were exposed simply in the physical act of standing up before their peers, and they made themselves more exposed and vulnerable through what they chose to share, and how they went about this sharing. Stories with themes of hurt, fear, loss, and anxiety, of family strife and economic uncertainty, unfolded next to stories affirming the centrality of creativity, or music, or humor to the speaker. And, in shaping the norm of vulnerability, teachers signaled the likelihood that the speeches

would be emotional. Ms. D. assured the group: “There are pervasive feelings of fear, we’re all feeling it, but everybody in here is gonna be supportive,” to which Ms. L. added: “We have Kleenex available. It’s okay to laugh, and it’s okay to cry, too.”

Focal student: Ynez

Ynez’s history of participation in the class. Ynez was a senior in high school, like everyone else in the Projects class. A beneficiary (such as it is) of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals act (DACA), she was born in Mexico, and moved without documentation to the United States when she was only eight months old. Despite growing up in the United States, and attending public school for twelve years, Ynez spoke with a slight accent, and her writing bore traces of her home language. She described herself as shy, as someone who preferred to stay close to her closest friend in the class, a student named Claudia, who was second-generation Mexican American and fluent in Spanish, with “legal” parents. Ynez and Claudia did all of the partner or group projects together: photography, podcast, and film. Claudia was most certainly Ynez’s “with,” in that they moved together as a social unit (Goffman, 1983). Without Claudia, Ynez would most certainly have quit the class, and even with her presence, Ynez said: “I honestly was going to quit the second day because my other friend bailed out on me, she switched out.” Ms. D. confirmed Ynez’s skittishness about the course: “She almost quit Projects at the beginning. We wouldn’t let her. We wouldn’t take her off the roll, remember that?”

I hadn’t really noticed Ynez before the episode. I mean, I noticed her, but she was quiet, and was most noticeable because she didn’t speak during whole-class discussions, even though she was supposed to as part of the shared inquiry format. Before the day in

question, she occupied “the floor” only once, for a presentation in front of both sections of the class in the media center, so roughly 42 students altogether. For this early assignment, students made their own versions of a documentary photographer’s work. Who they researched and which photos they selected to replicate was a matter of choice. Ynez and Claudia researched Los Angeles photographer Joseph Rodriguez’s photos and produced replicas of two images, with some differences, or revisions. Both photos were of small children: one of these (“Juvenile”) was a father holding a toddler in his arms (Rodriguez, 2004), and the other was of a baby in only a diaper, (“Boyle Heights”), standing in an empty lot, dirt-smeared, framed from below (Rodriguez, 2000).

Ynez and Claudia’s rendition of “Juvenile” was taken of a current student of their school, a young father with a toddler in arms. In their presentation, they commented that they were trying to convey what they said was the love and the stillness of Rodriguez’s father in the act of holding his son. For their version of “Boyle Heights,” they explained that they “changed the mood from sad to happy,” deliberately placing their baby in the center of the frame, violating the 2/3 rule they had just learned about, and drawing a few mild critical comments about their artistic decisions from Ms. D in the process. Their revised version showed a smiling, front-facing baby in a clean diaper, at an angle that was even with the camera, replacing the fierce, towering, dirt-smeared toddler in Rodriguez’s work.

Ynez later said this presentation wasn’t as meaningful as the other projects in the class because it “wasn’t about her life.” On examination, though, some of the themes Ynez and Claudia highlighted in their presentation appeared again in her later work. In

many ways, Ynez's project from the central episode (the *T.I.B.* speech) had everything to do with caring for the vulnerability of children, specifically, her own vulnerability as a baby, toddler, and child. Even their act of changing the mood of the diapered baby image illustrated a desire to correct something they felt to be unsettling in Rodriguez's original; their re-envisioning of the scene was a way of caring for the child in the photo.

The Event: Ynez's *T.I.B.* Performance

Ynez was the sixth speaker on that first day of *T.I.B.* presentations. Before beginning her speech, she turned to Ms. L. and said: "I'm getting the Kleenex. I'm a sentimental person." Throughout her performance, Ynez engaged in a fairly extreme level of vulnerability, not just in terms of the content, but in her presentation style. She shared emotional reflections about her childhood, which she described as unhappy and lonely, insisting, in fact, that she was unwanted, and that her sole memories were of a mother who couldn't love her, and who was alternately angry and cold or aloof with her and her sister. Punctuating this narrative were her photographs, which consisted of images of people alone on public transit, vegetation (mostly dead flowers), and shadowy figures whose heads were not in the frame. The group of photos shifted from black and white to color as she told of a change in her home situation. Ynez wept openly, actually alarmingly, throughout her speech.

Her belief, the necessary ingredient in a *This I Believe* speech, was fluid. From the audience, the belief expressed seemed to be the importance of "not giving up"; she later clarified that it was supposed to be about the "power of hope" following a draft of the essay that named the belief as "forgiveness." Describing her unhappy childhood, Ynez's

voice was soft, but determined. She stopped speaking to control her crying at several points, especially when describing a difficult period in her life, a time when she almost “gave up.” Later, she remembered it this way: “I started crying and the words cannot come out but I ... breathe and hold it together.” After a sustained period of anguish, both in memory and performance of memory, there came a time when Ynez was in her early teens that she stopped feeling suicidal, because her mother made it clear that she wanted and loved her. The utter desolation of her early memories seemed to be replaced by an acceptance of her mother’s difficulties as a 24-year old parent who found herself isolated, linguistically and geographically, with no hope of seeing her own family again, as an illegal immigrant to the United States.

After delivering the speech, members of the audience made comments, as they were instructed to do. This part of the *This I Believe* ritual consisted of general affirmations and commiserations, among them: “I’m so sorry you went through that. I didn’t know,” and “You made me cry,” “I guess I’m not the only one who had a shitty childhood,” and the more bland: “I really liked your photos.” After the audience feedback, Ynez went back to sit down next to her friend, Claudia. Her face was shining with tears, she breathed: “I did it.”

Ynez experienced her public vulnerability as deeply satisfying, and exhilarating; it created a lingering pleasure for her when she reflected on it months, and even one year later, at which point she again stated that she felt an enormous “wave of relief” immediately upon sharing her story. She wasn’t the only student to cry, and she wasn’t alone in her post-speech radiance. Over 75% of the group of 42 students in post-project

written reflections described the presentations as emotionally significant, both for themselves as presenters and as members of the audience. Before moving into Ynez's experience, I offer a number of these reflections in order to illustrate the widespread affective and emotional pattern among participants. I marked some of the patterns that stood out in their responses by underlining them (they were not in the original).

Absame	It was a <u>life changer</u> . When I was done presenting I felt that we were <u>together</u> --
Bailey	It was a really cool experience, maybe one of the few times where everyone seemed genuinely engaged in school. A lot of the time when doing presentations in class, hardly anyone is into what they're presenting or really cares. But this felt different, and it was a great project that I think allowed everyone in the class to <u>feel comfortable sharing</u> with each other.
Felix	It <u>felt very good to present</u> my "T.I.B." photo project. I've performed in front of large crowds, but I don't ever go up to the mic and blatantly state my beliefs. I <u>didn't feel vulnerable</u> because my brothers and dad taught me to not to have fear what others think but to be myself and express my true feelings. It was a relief to make a strong statement out loud and to have an audience that was fully attentive, because in this world it is difficult to be heard sometimes.
Gar	The most important thing that I learned in the unit is that my peers have a lot more to them than they show on the surface.
Ishmael	I learned from this project because I feel like I got to know people better and got a little bit <u>more comfortable</u> with everyone in the class. I liked listening to everyone's stories. The hardest part of this entire unit was getting up in front of everyone and presenting something about myself. I never really like doing that and it was especially hard since I <u>wasn't very comfortable</u> with everyone. But I guess it wasn't terrible.
Edwina	Presenting to everyone in the class was very <u>relieving</u> to me. I needed to be able to put all that I've held inside me for years into words, and to just get it out was <u>comforting</u> . In the end I didn't even care what people thought of me, or if I rambled, or if it was too much of a sob story.
Rico	<u>Presenting and showing emotion</u> is something I always found to be weak but it might have been the way I was raised I'm not really used to showing it. I'm happy that other people were there who think the way I do and know how hard it is growing up non-white. It's hard and not many white people will realize or experience it in their lifetime.

Fiona	If anything, I feel a bond between every person in the group now, because of how each person opened up. I thought the presentations were very <u>beautiful</u> , and even with my reluctance, I am so thankful that I got to share with the group about my belief.
Avery	The final project was really <u>fulfilling</u> for me and although I hate talking in front of people, it really made me have to work at going outside my <u>comfort</u> zone. I have never shared that part of my history with anyone besides my family and one or two friends. I barely even talk about it with myself. Getting the chance to share that time of my life was <u>terrifying</u> but also so <u>rewarding</u> . This project made me realize that I want people to hear my story.
Hani	I think the speech is what I'm most proud of, because I'm not an <u>open person, like I'm not an open book</u> at all, and I think it was one of the hardest things for me. I think sharing that part of my life with a whole bunch of strangers at the time, was so difficult, and like I don't cry in front of people, and I could feel myself choking up, I could feel my throat, and it was so hard, and so, sharing that, was like an accomplishment. I just, yeah, that essay <u>opened me up to being very uncomfortable, being comfortable in uncomfortable situations</u> , so I'm very proud of that.

These reflections refer repeatedly to *feelings* (often embodied) of comfort and discomfort, as well as the naming of pride, fear, and the general sense that revealing one's emotional life is a vulnerable thing to do, all responses that were discernible in Ynez's case, as well. Focusing on the details of Ynez's experience with her *This I Believe* performance offers a concrete episode of emotional intensity for us to consider more closely. The following analysis and discussion is an effort to slow down time in order to see what was happening at the moment of emergence and how it fit into Ynez's experience across and beyond the timeframe of the semester-long class. Mediated discourse analysis reminds us to look at the layers of timescales for any event, including thinking about how we could consider the histories of participation far back into Ynez's full lifespan. We could also focus more closely on the four years she spent at Midtown, or come closer to look at the timescale of the Projects class since the beginning of the term,

or closer still to see just her history of participation in the *This I Believe* assignment, and finally, pull more tightly into the circadian timescale of just that class period in the Black Box. And, it must be acknowledged that all of these histories are present at once, on top of each other. Ynez's speech, scratched as a palimpsest, or opened like Russian nesting dolls, is forever connected to layers of both personal and cultural stories and histories, regardless of my interest in commenting on, or actively foregrounding the shimmer of electric engagement in the fleeting episode.

Analysis of the moment: Ynez's exposure

We can situate the moment mostly within the circadian timescale (Scollon & Scollon, 2004), which can further be divided into event, episode, exchange, and utterance. The event (1) refers to the class period of Ynez's presentation, a two-hour block that contained multiple speeches, which was one part of a three-day series of performances, since not all students could present on the same day given the number in the class. Next, we can think of a smaller layer of time as the episode (2) of Ynez's complete performance, her time in front of the audience, bounded by the applause for the student before her, and the applause following her own speech, or perhaps, the moment she sat down in her seat next to Claudia. The exchange (3) was even narrower; it was any of multiple times in Ynez's speech when she knew that her audience was with her, when she experienced the things she said as dialogue, rather than monologue. This might have been most noticeable during the feedback time and the applause at the end, but the eyes and bodies turned toward Ynez, the quiet attention on her throughout the speech, was dialogic. Finally, within the cardiac and respiratory timescale there was also the level of

the utterance (4), which Scollon & Scollon compare to a step in walking (2004, p. 5), most keenly felt at the edge of the precipice, when Ynez asked for the Kleenex, or in her pause to breathe and collect herself before opening her mouth for one more word.

The moment when Ynez began speaking to the group was terrifying, because she was heading into the uncharted territory of being exposed in front of a group of people who she didn't know, and who didn't know her. Aside from Claudia, the entire audience was comprised of her social others. When she revisited the memory, months later, she described them as "a bunch of strangers," and, specifically, as people who were racially different from her:

At the beginning [of the class], I felt really, um, I didn't feel confident, I didn't feel comfortable with the people I was with, mainly because I saw myself different from them, like especially white students, and I kinda self-segregated myself from them because there was a lot of students that didn't look like me. I never thought I would share something so personal, and I couldn't believe that I told like a bunch of strangers something so personal about me, but I did it and I really felt proud...

(Interview transcript)

This exposure to different racial groups, "especially white students," represented a real risk for Ynez. We can read this vulnerability as an instance of Ynez showing her "face" to the other(s), in the Levinasian sense of the face issuing the command: "Do not kill me"; her exposure now made such harm a possibility, and it was something she didn't ordinarily allow, in school circumstances. In considering Ynez as the stranger revealing the nakedness (vulnerability) of her face to the audience, the audience assumes the

position of Levinas's subject beholding the other, but the roles were almost immediately flipped, or at least rotated, in the next performance, when Ynez took her place in the audience and listened to a different presenter. In this situation, the subject and the stranger were distinct positions, but they were not fixed ones.

Let's stop for a moment to ask why the white students were named as particularly frightening. The fact that they had institutional and societal power on their side means that they had a different experience in the risk of connecting with their social others, despite the inevitability of social hierarchies in any classroom (and the Projects class was no exception). To be plain, the risk of exposure for white students was less than the risk of students of color.

This risk was not something Ynez undertook willingly, exactly. The instructional arrangements--space, discourses about authenticity, requirements from the teachers via the syllabus and rubric--acted as mediational means to press Ynez, and her classmates, into a situation they had assiduously avoided for much of their schooling, according to their reflections and comments following the performance. It should also be noted that this risk was not a fear of failing in the usual "school" sense of not receiving a good grade; the stakes were much higher than this, at least in that moment. It was the risk and fear inherent in public exposure that made the moment of sharing akin to a free fall of some kind, like jumping off a diving board for someone who's afraid of heights.

Rather than falling, however, we must remember that the reason for the fear was direct, sort of hasty contact with an/other. The abruptness of suddenly placing oneself in a zone of proximity through sharing personal stories was what made the experience so

dramatic. It was a collision between self and other, rather than a gradual, slow-growing familiarity. Everybody in the combined class, regardless of previous relationship (which, for Ynez, was pretty much nonexistent aside from Claudia), would be able to hear her story, and watch her quickly lose any semblance of her usual “external display” (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 58) of composure through her continual crying. If this sounds cruel, in fact, her “surplus” (Levinas, 1969) appeared to offer a thrill, a palpable shiver of excitement.

The other aspect of Levinas that we have not pursued here is the notion that the other, the stranger, presents a puzzle to the perceiver: Ynez was revealed as unknowable in the moment that the group truly beheld her “face.” This unknowability, the “infinite,” created a desire to know and understand, which, I would argue Ynez sensed in her performance. She wanted to make herself known, to be seen, despite the risks, and her audience recognized that she was truly an/other, uncapturable, infinitely complex, fascinating, and possibly sacred:

In my other classes I wouldn't usually say personal things about myself because I feel that no one care, but in Projects like they gave me an opportunity to say like my story and who I am, instead of just saying my name and people just assuming things about me. People that are in Projects they know my story, and why, the person who I am, why I'm that person. It was my first time talking about something so personal and something that I am very sensitive to talk about. But once I got the courage to get it over with, I went up and as I sat there in front of 50 or so people I felt like they actually cared, so when I started talking about my

story I cried because of how much trouble I have had, but I felt so happy too because I'm still alive and got the chance to let other people know that I could do it. Hearing people clap so hard and loud made me fill up with joy and happiness because I felt that I had people who understood what I felt ... not exactly what I felt but felt the meaning of me sharing that story ... and that they accepted what I went through. (Post-project written reflection)

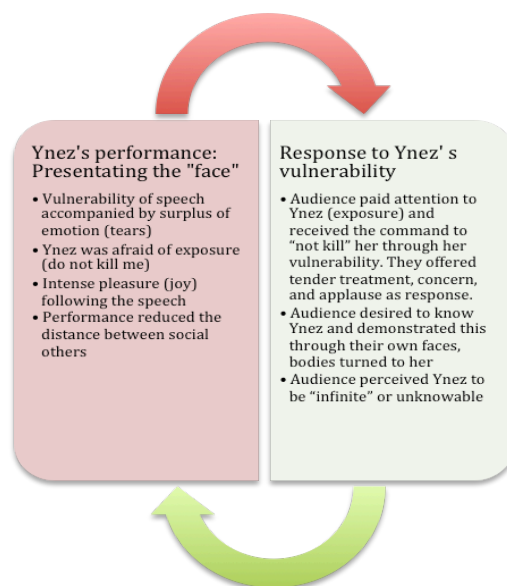
Ynez attributed her subsequent feelings of connection across differences to the idea that the others, even the white kids, now knew her story. Being seen, being known, brought her joy. We are helped in slowing down the moment of the speech episode by Ynez's substantial articulation of the complex emotional experience of vulnerability. To review, the multiple reasons for crying when she presented her "face" in front of "50 or so people" included:

1. She felt "sensitive" to tell her story and needed courage
2. She was emotional because she "got the chance" to tell her story, and she wanted people to know her
3. Her story was not a happy one—the tears were related to the pain in her past
4. She cried because she was relieved (happy) to be alive—she survived
5. Public vulnerability in itself was a new experience and may have been overwhelming. In her other classes, people only knew her in surface way (just her name); this group now knew who she was, and what made her that way

6. There were tears of joy in feeling understood, that the audience accepted (received) what she went through and showed this through clapping “hard and loud”
7. People understood what it meant to share her story, even if they couldn’t understand what she felt “exactly”
8. She felt like they “actually cared” about her

We know less about the perspective of the responsive and responsible audience, but reflective feedback on the unit from all students in the class indicated an appreciation in being able to hear from the other students in the class, a sense that it was valuable and profound to be part of the audience, not just to be a performer. Here we can map Ynez’s exhilaration, the *frissons* of joy in traversing the gap between self and other, to the composite structure of interactive intensity that marks an experience of “cosmopolitan desire” (Figure 3).

Figure 3
Features of Cosmopolitan Desire in Ynez’s Episode



Ynez did not have to get so personal in her speech. She indicated that this was not her intention going into the performance; she exceeded the emotion and openness of her *T.I.B.* essay, which had been about her childhood, but, being an essay, it was written more formally, and had no sorrowful face, to invoke Levinas, and therefore no tears. So why did Ynez reveal so much about herself? Perhaps it was her position at roughly the middle of the line-up of presentations for that day; the performances of vulnerability from the previous speakers illuminated the vulnerability in Ynez, making her more willing to present her “face” because she had already received the faces of her classmates. Perhaps the bodies and eyes turned toward her in the dark auditorium conveyed an attention and an interest that assured her that the audience was truly present with her in that moment, in a way they were not ordinarily available. Additionally, based on her statements about the course overall being satisfying because it allowed her to *feel* something, it is certainly conceivable that her willingness to risk such exposure emerged from a desire for feeling. And, finally, perhaps the pleasure she took in the experience of dropping into the deep end of public sharing gave her an emotional charge.

My argument is that this emotional charge occurred upon entering into a new relationship of proximity with her classmates, previously considered to be others, creating a sort of “improper” distance, in part because it happened all at once; the proximity was achieved through an emotionally intense, but bounded experience. The lingering effects of the closeness meant something to Ynez, although certainly the collision with her social others did not lead unswervingly to a new, perfect plateau of

social harmony in the class. There was however, an unmistakable change in the class following the *This I Believe* speeches, for Ynez, and for many others in the group.

Transforming the Nexus: Emanations from Ynez's Cosmopolitan Desire

Letting the vulnerability of the other illuminate the vulnerability in the self

Beyond Ynez's enactment of cosmopolitan desire through her own vulnerability and exposure, she was also on the receiving end of her classmates' vulnerability in their *T.I.B.* performances. She noted that "sharing and hearing others, getting to know my classmates and admire them for the courage of sharing a part of them and their life" was a big part of what made the *T.I.B.* events so powerful. She was especially moved by several students who talked about the pressures of being first and second generation immigrants: Rico and Juan, respectively 1st and 1.5 generation Latinx students, and Absame, a Somali immigrant who lived in a refugee camp in Kenya for many years. All of these presentations touched upon the difficulties of being new in the United States, a simultaneous appreciation for and tension with their parents, and the stresses of learning a new language, and new rules. While Ynez's own speech was not about her experience as an immigrant, directly, she carried the stories of her classmates into the remaining large summative assessments for the class: the podcast and documentary film. In the Deweyan sense, she was changed by the communication with her social others, or, invoking Spinoza (2002), she was affected by and she affected these others. Through the exchange, through dialogue, and thanks to their own exposure, Ynez found ways that Rico, Juan, and Absame could momentarily become "withs" in their common histories of migration—they were a collection who functioned as a unit (Goffman, 1983)—in the

social context of the classroom, despite their significant differences in gender, ethnicity, and religious and cultural beliefs.

Concretely, the connections with Rico, Juan, and Absame influenced Ynez and Claudia's podcast topic, which centered on the pressures facing first generation immigrant students to succeed; it also influenced the topic of Ynez's documentary film. Her group's film—created along with Rico, Claudia, Absame, and Nathan (a white boy with no first-hand history or relationship to immigration)--was called "Coming to America: Different Journeys." It was initially inspired by Absame's *T.I.B.* presentation of his immigration story, but it became more than that. In the end, the film was a response to and a refusal of Trump's vision of immigration as it was currently being amplified in the media, a full year before his election. Their film opened with a clip of Trump's speech, the now infamous line: "When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best...they're bringing drugs, they're bringing crime. They're rapists..." Their own collective immigration stories provided a mediational means for Ynez and her group to explore their thesis: "We should get to know immigrants and what they endured to be here, instead of fearing them." The film followed the stories of three immigrants: two youth (one from Somalia, and the other from Guatemala), and one adult from Mexico. Significant in their production was a decision to group all immigrants together, rather than marking distinctions between those with refugee status and those without. Their argument was that nobody moves for small reasons, and all stories of migrations typically represent enormous sacrifice, loss, and risk. Immigration became Ynez's "passion" (her

word), a force that drove her projects, both collaborative and individual, throughout the rest of the school year, as well as her extracurricular commitments.

After the intense, albeit momentary, experience of connection with her others during and following her *T.I.B.* speech, Ynez lived into recurring and deepening connections across difference with specific others in the Projects class. She and Claudia gathered the diverse film group around their idea, while at the same time they became linked as closer friends with Rico, and three Somali girls, also immigrants (Hani, Suad, and Jamilah). By the month after *T.I.B.* performances, Ynez's social "withs" in the class were rounded out in meaningful connections with two white girls (Fiona and Bailey), relationships that were made obvious because of their physical proximity and interactions on days when they didn't have to work tightly with their film production groups. On those occasions, even for small slivers of time, the girls sat at the central table in Ms. D.'s classroom, pulling chairs around so that everyone had a spot, and they engaged in a range of interactions, including teasing, play or experimentation with digital tools, parallel work, and serious and consequential discussions about their lives outside of the classroom. The following images offer a window into the scene at the central table. Photographs (Figures 4 & 5) show the group experimenting with learning how to record video using a digital camcorder. The group refracted each other's speech, overlapping both words and bodies as they tried out the equipment. The second photo (Figure 5) shows the intersection of Hani and Suad's hands, as they prepared their equipment to record an interview with Ynez.

Figure 4 Claudia and Hani experimenting with the camera



Figure 5



Next, photos (Figures 6 & 7) show the group focusing their attention on Ynez, putting her on the receiving end of the lens. Their facial expressions, directed at Ynez, convey something of the intimacy and pleasure that developed in this diverse group over the second and third months of the semester:

Figure 6: Claudia, Hani, Suad, Jamilah, Bailey looking at Ynez



Figure 7: Ynez at the moment of receiving the gaze of the small group (from Figure 6)



Further transformations

At the end of the Projects class, Ynez, unaccompanied by Claudia, advocated for the placement of her group's film in the public screening of all documentaries. Once she learned that the visiting artist liked to end the evening with the strongest film, Ynez

lobbied hard with Ms. D. to have “Coming to America” be the last movie of the night. To her frustration, the visiting artist elected to show their film first, ending with a less heavy-hitting movie about rescue dogs, a “not serious” topic, according to Ynez. Ynez was adamant about trying to get the prime spot in the program, a dramatic shift from not wanting to share her idea for a podcast in front of the whole group in the second month of the school year. Following her feelings of pride and purpose in the productions and her widened relationship circle from the Projects class, Ynez continued to enact transformations in her commitments and ways of presenting herself, especially her identity as the daughter of immigrants. The next semester, Ynez joined another English and Social Studies-combined class with the same teachers, for which she wrote and performed a spoken word piece. It was a variation on the theme of immigration, called “Dear United (U-N-I-T-E-D) States.” The poem was written as a series of short letters addressed to multiple audiences using a strong, forthright tone to confront attitudes and policies about immigration and how they made the speaker (Ynez) fear for her dad’s safety every day. Omitting details from the longer epistolary work makes it easy to see the progression of letter recipients, from ICE to Dad:

Dear ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement),

You will never understand how hard it is for me to let go of my dad every morning. [...]

Dear Racist People,

Let me tell you, you have no idea how hard it is. [...]

Dear United States Citizens,

Even if my dad is not a citizen, he has been here for half of his life. My dad works 12-hour shifts every day and still says he is blessed. You don't know how privileged you are. ... But I ask of you, don't blame [immigrants] for doing your job. [...]

Dear Immigrants,

You're not alone. [...]

Dear Dad,

You try not to show no emotion. Deep in your hazel eyes I see the desperation.

It's okay to let it out. You don't deserve to be threatened. You are my hope.

Thanks to you, I will pursue my dreams. I love you.

(Student work)

In Ynez's address of various entities, we can see her decisions about proper distance in action. She speaks from quite far off to ICE, to "racist people," and to the citizens of the United States, all of whom, she says, do not know her, do not understand. Thinking back to the elements of cosmopolitan desire, Ynez had no faith that these strangers had tried or would ever try to know her dad, and, by extension, herself. They were strangers who hadn't come close enough to know or see her, and therefore her desire to connect across the grave distance between them was limited to informing them that they were ignorant about her dad's reality, and ignorant, as well, about themselves. She was, however, willing to engage in some dialogue with the citizenry of the United States, because she "asks of [them]" greater understanding. In talking to immigrants, and especially when addressing her dad, Ynez closed the distance considerably, letting both

know that she was near (“you are not alone”) and that, in the case of her dad, she wanted to care for and support his emotional life.

Ynez delivered her spoken word piece in the main auditorium of the school. This time she did not cry, but was fierce and commanding on stage. Of her performance, Ms. D. said:

She just killed it, like was so proud of it, it was so powerful, and then she and Rico presented their work to the entire school. And she just feels like it's almost a responsibility she has now, that she makes this art, and she wants it to be represented in the world.

Implications

The fact that Ynez felt like her social others knew something about her following her performance of vulnerability in the *T.I.B.* speech, and that she liked this experience, led to a more just distribution of social power in the Projects classroom. Ynez’s connection to the white students in general, and more meaningfully to Bailey and Fiona, changed her claim to belonging in the dominant school culture, what we know to be mostly a whitestream space. This was a first for her. After the class ended, Ynez invested heavily in other expressive projects that were part of the second semester course she took with Ms. D. and Ms. L., a sort of un-digital companion class that entailed community and civic art production, such as creating a collective mural, the aforementioned spoken word unit, a community-wide parade, and more. Ynez’s trajectory, post-Projects, was aligned to projects of social justice aimed at raising awareness and increasing understanding about immigration, including lifting up DACA students, and the larger Latinx community

at the school. This carried over to her life after high school, as Ynez continued to participate in her community college Latinx student organization, while pursuing a degree that would allow her to work with immigrant families in need of support amid the difficulty of relocation and uncertainty, something she knew in her bones.

That students desire to know and be known by their social others may seem facile. It is not. Even the conditions for such contact are increasingly rare. There is a need for racially, ethnically, culturally (etc.) diverse schools and classes, without which there can be few opportunities for students to meet and have meaningful communication across difference. Desegregation and diversity are not just good ideas, but urgent matters of society-wide survival, and yet, they are under threat of extinction in public education in both traditional and charter schools. Should students be lucky enough to find themselves in a diverse classroom, the second need is curricular. Given Ynez's description of her history of "self-segregating" within her diverse district, school, and classroom, occasions must be deliberately created for cosmopolitan desire to emerge. Nobody enjoys feeling scared, uncomfortable, or exposed. Indeed, as Luke (2016) reminded us, the self-exposure is part of the tradition of Western artists, and not a universal stage in writing development that must be forced upon students of all cultural backgrounds. The vulnerability I'm describing as transformative in terms of relationships, might conceivably be harmful to students. What to make of this puzzle, since part of the power, I'm suggesting, comes from the discomfort of new proximity? The following chapter takes on some of these questions, in exploring the convergence of aesthetic experiences, self love, and resistance in both sites.

Chapter 5

Armed Love: Self-Love and Resistance in Aesthetic and Critical Projects

Love, or desire, moves people or groups from an existing situation, context, or identity, to a different one, an improvement on the current state. The teachers in both sites cultivated this mediating desire in their curriculum designs and practices, pushing their students to develop and enact aesthetic and critical projects that were expressions of self-love and resistance. This desire-as-engine is an example, at its best, of Freire's armed love; central to the curriculum were problems posed by students, who were continually urged to hold demands for a more just and inclusive society, at both micro and macro levels.

Aesthetic and critical projects

Before looking at students' enactments of armed love, I will collect some key definitions about how I'm conceptualizing their work as "aesthetic and critical projects." My understanding of aesthetics is not strictly related to art or the arts. I draw on Dewey's description of art as a quality that permeates an experience, emotionally and bodily, an immersive state of being fully engrossed in activity or work (Dewey, 2005 [1934], p. 339). By this reasoning, even the most humdrum actions can become artistic through what the audience (Dewey's "spectator") and the creator, both viewed as participants, bring to them:

The zest of the spectator in poking the wood burning on the hearth and in watching the darting flames and crumbling coals . . . he is none the less fascinated by the colorful drama of change enacted before his eyes and imaginatively

partakes in it.

(Dewey, 2005, p. 3)

The feelings in the spectator elevate both the product and the experience of making and appreciating the fire; the “imaginative partaking” (here I would swap in participation) sets it apart, infusing it with life, or a “heightened vitality” (Dewey, 2005, p. 18). In the aesthetic experience, the acts of taking in, responding, and producing “interpenetrate” each other, while the participant persists in a state of “happy absorption” (Dewey, 2005, p. 18). I interpret this happiness as the experience of being absorbed in itself, rather than a demand for pleasant feelings. It’s satisfying to be emotionally, intellectually, and artistically immersed as critical spectator and producer/designer.

And, absorption aside, aesthetic and artistic work has implications beyond the self. Both Dewey and Greene viewed artistic participation and production as positions and actions that could lead to social change, since change first emerges in the “climate of the imagination” (Dewey, 2005, p. 360). We must be able to imagine significant change in order to enact it, thus, imagination paves the way, predicting and desiring something that is *possible*, rather than actual. Any educational system with goals of equity and social justice ought to develop and nurture the imagination of its students and teachers, according to Greene. In countless lectures to teachers, she urged them to think, sense, and feel as though “things could be otherwise,” and imagine “new avenues for action” with their students (Greene, 1997, 1995) to “become different,” and to “live more ardently in the world” (Greene, 1995). Greene dreamed of a more just and equitable future populated by thoughtful, inventive, problem-solving, individuals, collaborative, and yet capable of

fierce independence. Greene's vision and work--inspiring teachers and students to participate in shaping aesthetic and political discourse, through "wide-awake" dialogue and action, through response and creation--may sound utopian, but it resonates for educators (like me) who have seen aesthetic experiences as profoundly moving for students in all kinds of contexts.

Further, the struggle to sort through and make critical meaning of what "authoritative others are offering as objectively 'real'" (Greene, 1995) is in itself an imaginative, aesthetic response to an overwhelming barrage of defining messages and circumstances. Imagination of things being other has been conceived of as a cognitive act of filling in the gaps between a known state, and a reached-for, desired future state (Pelaprat & Cole, 2011), although there's no need to place imagination within the interior and individual domain of cognition. Rather, creative envisioning certainly occurs within and without, from careful planning and collaboration, to wild imaginings of a new state, to conjuring from another consciousness (Anzaldua's *coatlicue*, maybe).

Finally, in resisting oppression and crafting hopes for better futures, aesthetic experiences are transactions between text/object and audience who are engaged in a reciprocal and creative relationship that is socially, culturally, and temporally located. Maintaining vigilance about who stands to gain from public discourses and representations, and who has been ill served and marginalized in text or context is imperative in thinking through an aesthetic literacy education that is rooted in progressive, critical, and critical sociocultural theories of learning.

Aesthetics and Literacy Education

The combination of aesthetic experiences and literacy education has yielded numerous excellent descriptions of curriculum ideas and manifestos about critical literacy, multimodality and connected learning. I offer here a different rationale for foregrounding aesthetic experiences in learning. Aesthetic and critical projects in these classrooms were meaningful to the participants because they were emotionally/affectively moving to them, because they expressed specific love for both self and community, and because they demanded and performed a more just vision of the future. With this understanding in mind, I find four overarching requirements for aesthetic experiences in academic settings: (1) heightened emotional and/or affective engagement, (2) dialogue with ideas and texts; critical response and resistance, (3) multimodal production, including making, borrowing, redesigning and remixing visual, theatrical, alphabetic (and other) texts, and (4) performance of productions in front of an audience, and performance as an opportunity for identity enactments. I include the following overview of the four requirements in support of the argument that the classrooms in the study offered opportunities for students to enact “armed love” through aesthetic literacy experiences. I then move to examine two case studies centered on this kind of student work.

Emotion

Provocations of Jouissance and Punctum

Aesthetic experiences are typically thought to be different from mundane experiences because of a heightened emotional intensity and because of their expressive, communicative and interactive qualities. Barthes (1975) pointed out differences in this

heightened intensity, theorizing that aesthetic experiences were sometimes pleasurable (*plaisir*) and sometimes ecstatic (*jouissance* or bliss). He described bliss as emotionally suffused and climactic, at once unbearably sweet but also redolent of “loss . . . it discomforts, unsettles the reader's historical, cultural, psychological assumptions, the consistency of his tastes, values, memories, brings to a crisis his relation with language” (Barthes, 1975, p. 14). As noted in Chapter 4, Barthes’ loss existed in the gaps between words; bliss was the felt thrill of wanting something, of noticing a text or artwork’s missing, continually deferred, meaning, of unfulfilled desire.

In later writing, Barthes conceived of a similar aesthetic response to visual texts (in this case, photographs), with his notion of *studium*, a sort of general, enthusiastic interest in an image, versus *punctum*, which he referred to variously as the “stick, prick, speck, point, cut, little hole” that disturbed the *studium* experience (Barthes, 1981). The implication, of course, was that *jouissance* and *punctum* were superior, engaging, and possibly transformative aesthetic experiences in contrast to tame, bland *plaisir* and *studium*. For Barthes, the aesthetic experience was a peak one, complex and emotionally significant, sometimes ecstatic, but also startlingly, disruptively difficult. The aesthetic projects in the two classrooms offered opportunities for experiences of *jouissance* and *punctum*: they were disturbing, they provoked, and they were transformative.

Emotion in the Aesthetic Experience

The very notion that aesthetic experiences are meant to be emotional ones comes out of seeing them as sensed, felt, heightened, intense ways of knowing. Both aesthetics and emotions are unnecessarily but frequently located in the body, and both have been

considered less legitimate than intellectual, rational ways of knowing. I say unnecessarily, because we are all body, and should not pretend otherwise. Of course, emotionality and aesthetic experiences are not separate from intellectual and rational ones, but they are historically less valued. Emotions are expected and even welcome during aesthetic experiences, while there is an effort to pretend that they can be shut off during other moments of learning. Research on emotions and art in education have looked at emotion and affect as something that attaches to an object, text, or, “stuff” (Ahmed, 2004; Burnett, Merchant, & Pahl, 2014), so much so that an object becomes sticky and "saturated with affect, [becoming a] site of personal and social tension" (Ahmed, 2004, p. 8).

Research on affect (Deleuze & Guattari, 2004; Massumi, 2015; Sedgwick, 2003) continues to help me think about how intense moments in these classrooms worked to unsettle and exceed what is looked for in traditional literacy learning experiences. While emotions are not missing from classrooms, generally, they are constrained. School emotions are typically more policed or contained into those desired types of emotion catalogued for “social-emotional learning,” which, ironically, being classroom-appropriate, they do less work toward learning and change. The two classrooms in the study seemed to expect and allow for a broad range of emotional and affective acceptability.

Critical Aesthetic

In addition to inviting emotion and affective intensities into the classroom, these aesthetic projects called for the identification of problems that were significant to the

learner. Here I find Spivak's "positive sabotage" of art and aesthetics to be helpful, in thinking about how the imagination may be employed in the interest of democracy, to "make room for justice" (Spivak, 2012, p. 21), in an "ethical intervention" against the mind-numbing uniformity of globalization, especially egregious, according to Spivak, in places we least expect to be brainwashed, such as our increasingly corporate universities (Spivak, 2012, p. 2), and, I would add, in our K-12 settings.

In these classrooms, aesthetic and the critical responses were not binaries. Critical and transformative strategies of talking back to what we read, see, and hear, learning to notice the ways that all texts and all readers are both informed by ideology and positioned by each other (Janks, 2000; Luke, 2012) can and does occur within an aesthetic experience, as it did in both Ms. D. and Ms. K.'s classrooms. This capacity is essentially the work of critical literacy education (e.g. Hicks, 2004; Langer, 1995; Lewis, 2000; McGillis, 1997; McLaughlin and DeVogd, 2004; Misson & Morgan, 2006; Pindyck, 2016). The ability to read and produce texts aesthetically--in the Rosenblattian sense and beyond--*and* critically is crucial to listening and being moved enough by another perspective to desire and enact change.

Production and Performance

Multimodal Production

Literacy is essential a multimodal endeavor, even when it is not of a technological nature. The Projects class was obviously multimodal and digital, while the ELA-Social Studies class at Critical Academy was multimodal in that projects required alphabetic and visual productions and performances. Both called for students to address disparities in

“life chances” (New London Group, 2000, p. 76) through multimodal literacy production that emphasized aesthetic expression. Research has highlighted the aesthetic power of multimodality in conjunction with its offering of a critical and participatory approach to literacy (e.g. Ito et al, 2013; Jocson, 2006; Morrell, 2002, 2013; Selfe, 2007; Street, Pahl, & Rowsell, 2010), and, teachers are typically urged to open classroom literacies to genres of texts that will be familiar and resonant for their students, a fact reflected in the Common Core and, increasingly, in the availability or even mandated use of tablets, for example. That said, the audit culture has not figured out how to use aesthetic multi-literacies in testing environments, further disconnecting outcomes from literacy practices that are valued and used by most students as relevant and meaningful modes of expression. Both Ms. D. and Ms. K. enthusiastically sought experiences of multimodal production for their students to redesign the actual in favor of the possible.

Performance of Texts and Identities

The aesthetic literacy experience isn’t fully participatory without public performance. In producing work that will be received by others, productions become “prospective”; they have a future beyond the assignment book, standing in contrast to competence, which implies responding to directions or otherwise meeting certain benchmarks/standards, and critique, looking back on what has already happened (Kress, 2010, p. 6). A public performance, whether a dramatic poetry slam, a reading of an essay, the airing of a podcast, or the screening of a video, entails saying something out loud, representing an amplified version of the self, and it is different than writing an essay and turning it in (although this is a performance for one). The aesthetic experience of

performance in literacy learning breathes urgency and life into the project, and is valuable for how it shapes production by keeping the audience experience in mind, and for how it may transform participants' conceptions of themselves and their social others (Athanases 2005, 2014; Harmon & McClure, 2011; Perry & Medina, 2011).

As noted in Chapter 4, the exposure of public sharing created an affective intensity and afforded opportunities for diverse students to "value one another's experiences and knowledge" (Enciso et al, 2009, p. 363). In some cases, digital recordings offered a way of making performance a little bit less terrifying, one step removed from a real-time encounter with a live audience, as with Youth Radio (Soep & Chavez, 2010) stories, or with the podcasts and films in the Projects class, for which students collaborated on high-quality productions to share with a local audience. The production, distribution, and audience response to multimodal texts also included construction and styling of identities, since some version of a self is carried along with the text, and all were easily "mediated and amplified by digital and electronic technologies" (Hull & Hibbert, 2009, p. 140).

Performance yielded participatory, transformative and dialogic learning experiences, often due to the unscripted surprises of finding one's body in space and in proximity to different and unknown peers. Indeed, performance experiences were uncomfortable, and I don't aim to glorify them as unproblematic, or universally empowering; however, the tensions of embodied performance, as suggested in Chapter 4, contained possibilities for connecting across difference, understanding multiple perspectives, imagining different trajectories, and enacting creative resistance. If

identities shifted through the improvisation, adaptation, and problem solving of performance, inviting an expanded self, or perhaps a self in the process of “dynamic becoming,” then it is worth making space for “embodied, rapidly moving, affectively charged, evolving acts that often escape prediction and structure” (Leander & Rowe, 2006, p. 431). Both classrooms offered this opportunity in different ways, with emotional performances that were mediated by visual and digital texts.

Data Sources and Analysis

I considered the two classrooms in the study as sites of engagement, in which both group and individual histories of participation and possible trajectories converged in specific “social occasion[s]” that were “spatially and temporally bounded” (Norris & Jones, 2005, p. 144, 157). Student work was the most significant source of data for this chapter. The productions were multimodal, and included presentations and performances of photography projects, poetry, visual artwork, nonfiction prose, podcasts, and documentary films. In addition to considering these aesthetic and persuasive productions, I drew from written reflections, interview transcripts, field notes, and audio and visual recordings. Patterns, codes, and themes emerged from the student projects, as well as from the way students reflected on their work and the experience of creating and sharing it. While all members of the full participant group were included in the analysis, from both sites, I elected to look closely at the experiences and productions of one participant from the middle school (Casey), and one from the high school (Alexander). In focusing on the experience of these two students, I refer to their histories in school, generally, and in the class from the study, in particular, including their interactions with students and

teachers, their production and performances of texts of resistance, and their reflections on these relationships and texts as conveyed through interviews.

In describing their productions, I included information and interpretation that demonstrates how the work met the criteria for an “aesthetic” experience, developed above: in other words, I show how each text was a performance of multimodal resistance that was emotionally engaging for the producer. As in Chapter 4, I used mediated discourse analysis to explore other aspects of the data. In contrast to Chapter 4, instead of looking at interactional episodes, I found it most useful to think about what the two focal students were building or designing with their compositions and performances, what mediational means they used to create meaning, and how their work was oriented in time.

Before sharing stories about and work from these two students, I offer a view of participants in each site (Tables 4 and 5), to establish the highlighted voices as interesting and powerful but also fairly typical; thus, selection of data from these participants was purposeful, but their aesthetic work and experience was consistent with that of the entire roster of students for both of the sites.

Table 4
Aesthetic and Critical Projects (Middle School)

Middle School (Critical Academy)					
<i>Participant name (pseudo-nym)</i>	<i>Demographic information (participant identified)</i>	<i>Desired change based on problem posed</i>	<i>Aesthetic project (performance that is emotional, critical, & multimodal)</i>	<i>Related projects</i>	<i>Key loving relationships in support of desired change (linked to interaction order)</i>
Casey	white low income 8 th grade female	Acceptance and love for her gay identity from	“This is Expectation” story/ poem Coming out haiku	‘Zine article on GLBTQ suicide “Looking forward” poem	Ms. K (ELA) Ms. A (history) Ms. M (SpEd) Ms. X (Social

	gay	family, church community, and self	presentation		Worker) Self Anisa Kamika Sister Dad
Yanna	African American low income 8 th grade female oldest of 10	Fair treatment for African American students, including herself (racial equity); Success in school, Freedom of expression	‘Zine article on discipline policies and suspension statistics, including context of her own history of suspensions Final presentation on the culture of her family	Silent reading - historic fiction about her “ancestors” (which she finds “comforting”) Artwork for Hmong migration project as parallel to her family’s migration from the South	Self Ms. K Ms. A Ms. M Marquisa Sister (in a different class period, but often visited)
Keira	white middle income 7 th grade female in a romantic relationship with a girl in another class	Introvert acceptance; openness about depression	“Girl” story/poem Presentation about herself as an introvert ‘Zine article about mental health stigma	Kahoot alter-ego (Ted Cruz) Fan fiction	Rory Olivia (others not mentioned)
Prachi	white middle income 7 th grade female	Gender equity in academic settings	‘Zine article about gender bias in schools: materials, testing	“Girl” story/poem about family responsibility Fan fiction	Taylor Mom
Ayrie	African American lower-middle income 7 th grade female	Respect for racial identity expression; Racial equity	‘Zine article on appropriation of Black culture (hair and fashion styles, music, dance, language) which is “insulting”	“Girl” story/poem Friend group presentation (African American girls)	Dionna Wateri Self Ms. K

Table 5
Aesthetic and Critical Projects (High School)

High School (Midtown High School)					
<i>Participant name (pseudo-nym)</i>	<i>Demographic information (participant identified)</i>	<i>Desired changes based on problem posed</i>	<i>Aesthetic project (performance that is emotional, critical, & multimodal)</i>	<i>Related projects</i>	<i>Key loving relationships in support of desired change (linked to interaction order)</i>

Alexander	African American both parents immigrants (Ghana, Europe) low-middle income male	End of white supremacy, end to the ongoing precariousness of Black lives	Photography series of Black power fist hair pick Performance of This I Believe (T.I.B.) speech on Black power Photographs inspired by BLM documentary photographer	Podcast on a new food coop in a majority Black neighborhood (employment, gentrification) Film on the program for recent immigrants at the high school	Self Principal R Felix James
Hani	Somali American 1.5 generation (age 6 immigrant) Muslim low income female	Freedom and acceptance for Muslim women to wear the hijab; freedom for Muslim women to express multiple identities	Performance of T.I.B. speech containing personal story about her hijab Podcast on female Muslim boxer Film on girls basketball team and athletic uniforms + hijab	Redoing Steve McCurry's photographs of Afghan women	Taifa Suad Jamilah Ynez Bailey Fiona Claudia Ms. D. Ms. L.
Ishmael	African American middle income male	Inclusion, opportunity and support for African American male students	Film on the B.L.A.C.K. class Podcast on the "achievement gap"	T.I.B. speech with personal narrative about being mixed race, encounters with police, etc.	Riley Edwina Ashley Ms. D Self Mr. C
Bailey	white middle income female	End violence against women; end sex trafficking	Film on sex trafficking following one woman's story: "Safe Streets" Podcast about a program for survivors of sex trafficking	Photography project replicating images that documented domestic violence	Fiona Ms. D Hani Ynez Claudia Zantha
Rico	Latino (Mexican American) 2 nd generation low income male	Increase understanding about the immigrant and 2 nd gen. immigrant experience	T.I.B. speech about his mother Film: "Coming to America"	Podcast: "Poverty in Education"	Claudia Ynez Absame

Desired Changes and Aesthetic Projects

While the aesthetic and critical projects were quite different between the middle

school and high school classrooms, both sites had patterns in the kinds of problems posed and desired, changed realities. These were variations on a theme of radical inclusion and acceptance for a community that was not understood and not cared for in the larger society. The students created texts that would educate and move their audiences to see their chosen problem—of unfair treatment, harm, lack of acceptance, lack of opportunity—and to provoke these viewers/listeners enough that they would want to do something about it, to get them to care, and to enlist them in action.

At the middle school level, the projects were most often directly linked to the students' lives. Projects included research and reflection on being an introvert in a society that favors extroverts, being gay in a heterosexist world, being female in a patriarchal society, being in an abusive foster care setting, being an African American girl who has been suspended and expelled for behavior “violations” since 1st grade. These students researched the bigger, more macro, story about something that affected them in their daily lives, at the micro level, creating texts that served as manifestos, demands, revisions of their own histories, and ultimately, imaginations of how these problems might be addressed according to their desire.

While many students in the Projects class at the high school also worked on projects about problems that affected them personally, others researched problems that had local impacts but that were not initially connected to them. Students developed relationships to the problems addressed in their digital texts, and, after immersing themselves in the people and lives affected by the reality, they became, over time, citizen warriors who wanted to share the gravity and urgency of the situation. During the

semester-long course, students tackled topics such as domestic violence, the experience of moving to the United States for immigrants, sex trafficking, cultural bias in standardized testing, music programming in city schools versus more wealthy suburban schools, efforts to control Muslim women's choices about wearing the hijab (within and outside of their communities), gentrification, violence against Native American women, and the experience of African American young men in schools, going beyond the so-called achievement gap.

Introducing the Focal Students

Casey

Casey's asymmetrical brown hair hung messily around her pale face. When she opened her mouth to talk or smile, which she did frequently, you couldn't help but notice a front tooth broken almost in half. She was the source of ongoing disruptive bursts of laughter, exclamations, and complaints during class, although there were days when she said nothing whatsoever. She often came in late, or left in the middle, again, usually emphatically, accompanied by loud cursing. Although she was definitely vocal, Casey wasn't alone in telegraphing her status--good days, rotten days, and in-between days--in this space. Roughly a quarter of the students in this class routinely expressed themselves in a fairly full-throated public performance, something that was remarked on by teachers and other students only intermittently. Casey is white; she identified as gay (seeming to prefer this description to others) and female.

History of mobility in schools and home. By the time of this study, Casey had attended six different schools; in her words, she had "a really bad history of schools." I

would add that she had a difficult history with her primary caregivers and housing, having lived in five different households, all of them family: her mom, two grandmothers, an uncle, and her dad. During the year of the study, Casey lived with her dad, who worked as a leather tanner. She attended this school for both her 7th and 8th grade years, and, while quick to point out some things that made her mad about it, she spoke highly of it overall.

Favorite Class. Casey was especially fond of the English-Social Studies class, which she described during an interview as her favorite, because of the teachers and the content:

Well, the teachers, they're my favorite teachers, like especially Miss K, who is my favorite teacher in the entire school. I call her my mom.

The ease and comfort Casey displayed in her relationship with Ms. K. was noticeable.

She did, in fact, call her “mom” much of the time, frequently demanded individual attention from her during work time, and praised her openly, shouting out to her mid-interview: “We were just saying how great you are. We're not even being sarcastic.”

Casey’s other “withs” in the class included Ms. A and Ms. M, the other teachers in the class (social studies and Special Education), and Anisa, whom Casey said was “like a sister” to her. Anisa, as a sidenote, had been in multiple foster care settings since she was very young, and lived with Casey and her dad for entire months of their 8th grade year. Casey’s dad couldn’t legally act as her foster parent because he had been convicted of a felony.

Casey also liked the class because she had a sense of herself as a writer and enjoyed having other people hear her words, although she professed to dislike standing up to share her work and typically had a teacher read with or for her when she was asked to be at the front of the room.

... I'm a writer. I love writing, and, I don't really show, I don't really, I mean, I love writing, like that's my favorite thing, I just don't like presenting it. I'm pretty sure you caught on to that.

((softly)) [I'm most proud of] my writing . . . ((louder)) But I hate my writing.

The expressed ambivalence here can be taken at face value, but I think it was more likely the case that Casey didn't want to assert her writer identity too forcefully, so after averring that it was important to her, she pulled back for protection, and cover.

Alexander

Alexander was a lean, fashion-forward senior in high school; his neat side fade haircut was topped with a high faux hawk. He identifies as Black, and male. His father moved to the U.S. from West Africa, and his mother came to the U.S. from northern Europe (withholding the names of the countries in the interest of anonymity). He speaks some of his father's first language, and more of his mother's language because as a child he spent some summer breaks with his maternal grandparents. Although his parents were college-educated, Alexander made frequent remarks about his own lack of means to attend college. In the year following graduation, he attended a local community college, with a somewhat vague intention of focusing on math.

Projects class. In class, Alexander was confident and outspoken. He was a frequent contributor to whole-class discussions that piqued his interest, especially those that were either shared inquiry-style, or those that were meant to offer feedback and constructive criticism to his peers. He seemed generally comfortable with, if unmotivated by, his relationships with peers and teachers, although he was well liked, and joked around with both:

It's funny, I joined [Projects] as a backup. They put me in this African American history class, and I was like, "Cool, I get to learn some African American history, and African history," cuz like I've never learned that in school. But then I got there and it was a white teacher, and I was like "Deuce, I'm not going for that." So they put me in [Projects], and I was like "I'll see how it is, and if I don't like it I'll just drop it," cuz, I have enough credits to graduate, so I joined and I liked it right away. I liked the teachers, the kids. I've known them since freshman year, we're cool, so I stuck with it . . .

Notably, Alexander's closest adult ally appeared to be the principal of the school--Principal R.--who lived near him when he was growing up. The principal dropped by the classroom periodically, to check on the technology needs for the class, which he helped buttress, banter with Ms. D., and generally hobnob with Alexander and other students in this relaxed and informal setting. In addition, Alexander had a small number of close male friends in the room, but he didn't limit his interactions to these students. With a charismatic presence, he commanded the attention of the room quite easily; his self-

assurance was palpable and he was often, but not always, generous in his paying attention to students who weren't his "withs."

Problems posed/Desired Change

Enacting Freire's "problem-posing" curriculum

Central to critical pedagogy is Freire's (1996) notion of a problem-posing curriculum, wherein the content and work of learning comes at least as much from the students as from the teacher. It is thus thought to be relevant to the lives of the students at the local level; it is "true" or genuine, and not imposed on them. As described in Chapter 3, both classes had goals of disrupting the status quo, although they enacted these in completely different ways. In practice, not all students come to class with an awareness of a problem that is significant to them, nor do they possess a burning desire to change the status quo. The students at both sites offered a mixture of these sensibilities. Some lived with intense social problems every single day, such as a student of color living in a racist society. Others had previously developed interests in social dilemmas that didn't immediately affect them, such as Bailey, a student who had done a school project on sex trafficking several years prior, who was still worried and angry about the problem. Still others became attuned to problems through conversations with their peers, augmented by research they undertook for the class, such as Elliot, a white student who was outraged upon learning of cultural biases in standardized testing that favor people like him (white students, students whose parents attended college, etc.).

Resistance = Desire

Regardless of how it is arrived at, resistance against the thing that stands in the way of freedom propels the social actor toward something better. The propulsion, as noted earlier, acts like an engine driving toward a desired change, a response, hopefully a solution, to the problem posed. Hence, *resistance* can be equated with *desire* itself, mediating between the present and an alternate present, or future. Part of what must happen, then, is an envisioning of alternate realities, e.g. non-oppressive stories and structures. Students may not present a neat and tidy plan to arrive at this change, but there is a need to imagine something new, be it humble or grand. Along with many others (e.g. Dewey, 2011; Greene, 1995; Medina, 2012), I have suggested that art or aesthetic experiences offer a literacy route to gesture or plot out this new vision. In this section, I will identify the key “problems posed” by the focal students, as well as their desired realities, as expressed in their productions and interactions.

Casey: Acceptance and love for gay identity

One of the key reasons Casey might have identified Ms. K. as “understanding,” was because she is a queer teacher who is fully out at school. This openness is accepted at Critical Academy (CA), where a number of teachers identified as lesbian, bisexual, or transgender. For Ms. K. to share her sexual orientation as one of many joyful aspects of her identity was undoubtedly powerful for a student like Casey, who had “liked girls [her] whole life” until she officially came out in 7th grade. Casey felt that she could be herself at CA, and she credited the school with “helping [her] come out.” While she was out in this setting, as well as at home, she desired acceptance and love for her gay identity from family, church community, and seemingly, herself.

Texts related to Casey's emancipatory project included (1) a presentation on gay acceptance through her own experience of coming out, developed as a series of haiku poems against a backdrop of the gay pride flag, with research about the meaning and genesis of the flag. Most of the discussion for this chapter will be centered on the haiku project, and (2) a personal prose poem/story based on Jamaica Kincaid's "Girl" (1978). Also included is (3) a poem written on her own, called "Looking Forward," and (4) a 'zine article on the problem of GLBTQ suicide and efforts to fight it, which Casey (along with other class members) delivered to assorted people in the neighborhood, including students at a nearby college campus, and presented to the school and parent community of Critical Academy.

Alexander: End of white supremacy

Alexander identified the problem he wanted to address early in the school year, perhaps on the second day of class. The group was discussing an excerpt from *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, and the talk had turned to a critique of their own experience in school as less about thinking and more about performing for grades. After a white student remarked: "You don't have to be smart to be good at school," Alexander pointed out that because the system favors white students, students of color have the burden of performing in a white structure, and that perhaps a different standard should be in place until white supremacy is eradicated. In short, Alexander's drive was for an end to white supremacy, his desired reality was for this, and for a valuing of Blackness.

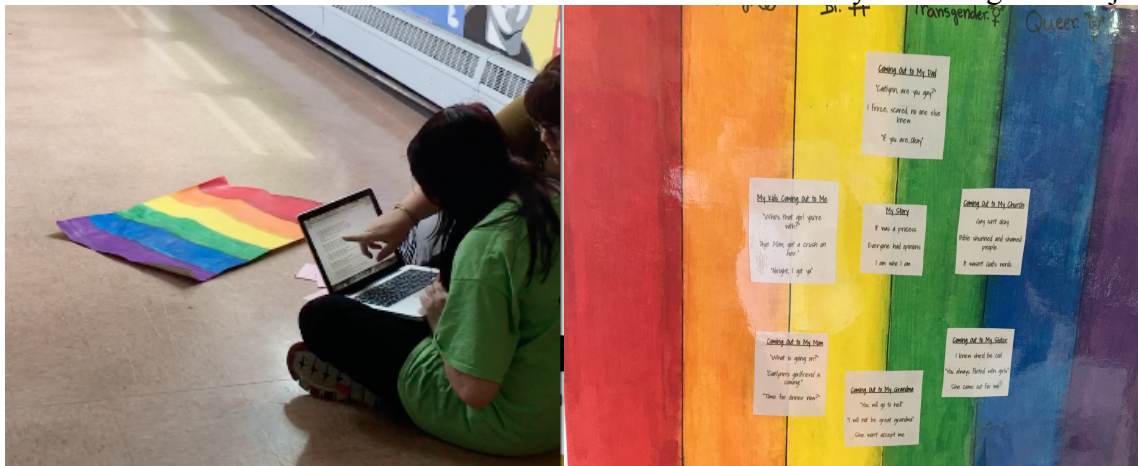
Compositions that Alexander created to address the problems of white supremacy and the desire for an ascendant Black power included (1) his "This I Believe" speech and

slide show, (2) a photo series that replicated some of the images created by a Black Lives Matter documentary photographer, (3) a podcast on gentrification in a Black neighborhood, and somewhat related, (4) a documentary film about a school program for students who had only recently arrived in the U.S. The focus for this chapter will be Alexander's T.I.B. speech and the photographs for his slide show.

Resistance and Self Love in Aesthetic Productions

Casey's Productions

Figures 8 & 9
Casey's Coming Out Project



Casey's presentation was a response to the prompt: "We have connections to many cultural groups. Tell us about one of your cultural groups. What do you want people to know about it? How might you represent it? Where do you fit in?" Casey prepared for this project by researching and making (a paper version of) the rainbow flag. She then wrote a series of short conversations about coming out to the people in her family, both remembered and imagined, in the form of haikus. The short poems were printed out and placed on rectangles surrounding a center haiku labeled "My Story."

Below, the words of each haiku “story” are printed on the left, and a summary of Casey’s performance, both comments and actions, are offered on the right in double parentheses. My questions and comments are included in italics.

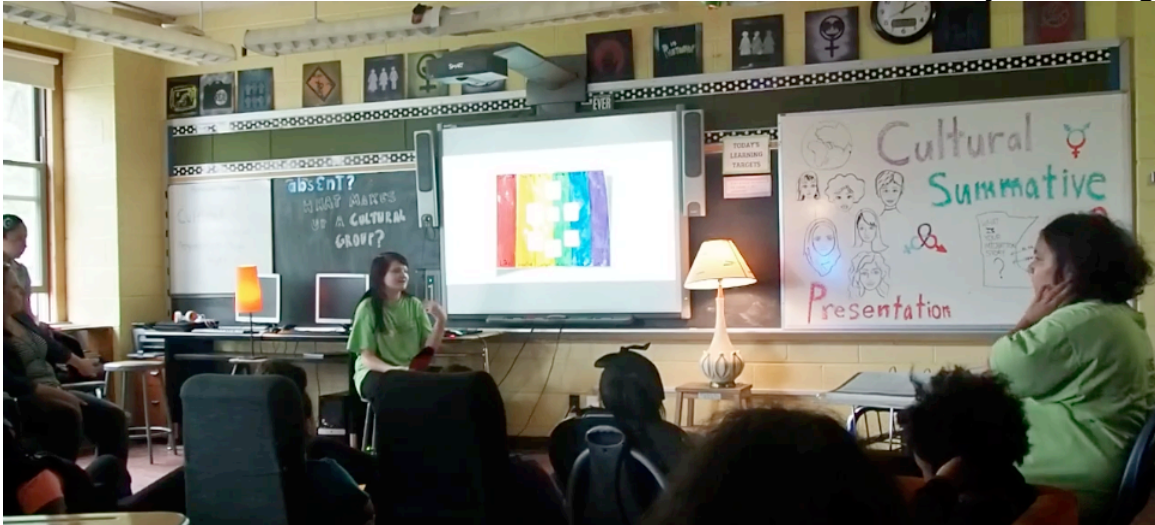
Text of Casey’s Poems	Casey’s comments and <i>my comments</i>
<u>My Story</u> It was a process Everyone had opinions I am who I am	
<u>Coming out to my dad</u> “Casey are you gay?” I froze, scared no one else knew “If you are...okay”	((Casey explained during the presentation that this had happened in an aisle of Target.))
<u>Coming out to my church</u> Gay isn’t okay Bible shunned and shamed people It wasn’t God’s words	<i>I’m not sure what the antecedent for “it” is: the Bible wasn’t God’s words? Or being gay was against God’s words?</i>
<u>Coming out to my sister</u> I knew she’d be cool. “You always flirted with girls.” She came out for me.	<i>The sister is five years older than Casey. Her response is that of unconditional love and acceptance</i>
<u>Coming out to my grandma</u> “You will go to hell. I will not be a great-grandma” She won’t accept me.	<i>Rejection by grandmother. Casey’s entire “Girl” prose poem-- “This is Expectation,” included below-- is written as a conversation between herself and this grandma.</i>
<u>Coming out to my mom</u> “What’s going on?” “Casey’s girlfriend is coming over” “Time for dinner now”	((Casey explained that she was having a friend over, and her sister identified the guest as her girlfriend, and her mom ignored it, saying it was time for dinner.)) <i>Mom was indifferent, but didn’t outright reject</i>
<u>My kids [sic] coming out to me</u> “Who’s that girl you’re with?” “Aye Mom, got a crush on her” “All right. I got ya”	<i>Projects far into the future to imagine what she’ll be like when her child comes out to her, in pointed contrast to both her mom and grandma’s response</i>

To return to the haiku in the middle of the flag, “My Story” was hardly a story, containing little in the way of explanation: “It was a process / Everyone had opinions / I am who I am.” “It” referred to coming out; “everyone” referred to her family members. Despite the lack of explanation, the meaning is pretty clear. Centering her story and calling it a “process” made coming out something she did without changing her position, without capitulating to anyone else’s needs or desires about her identity, although “everyone had” opinions, or expectations about Casey as a queer 13-year old girl in what mostly felt like a straight world. And, while the reactions of her grandmother and of her church were both negative, these were placed in rectangles, as “opinions” that seemed to be contained and viewable, something to be filed under “what grandma said”--or, maybe “norms about girlhood expressed by grandma”--and not, in the end, defining or defeating. In voicing conversations that had already happened, and imagining others, even projecting herself into the future to reassure her own child, Casey enacted a desire for a different, better future, one in which an adult version of herself responded with love to an imaginary gay child (or alternately, in a rewriting of her own history of coming out, what the adult should have said to her, a sort of “do over”). In this revision, the adult tells the child: “I got ya,” instead of “You will go to hell.”

Casey wanted to be first to share her project with the class on the first day of the presentations. She made sure of her spot in the order by shouting out this preference (“I call going first”), and then taping up her poster and moving to claim the stool in front of the class, even while Ms. K. was making opening announcements. The room had dimmed

lights, and couches, chairs, and desks were arranged in a horseshoe around the speaker's spot, as seen below in Figure 10.

Figure 10
Casey Performing



While she displayed enthusiasm about going first, the transcription from a video recording of the presentation (below) shows Casey's self consciousness in introducing this project in front of the audience of her peers. She opened with a big statement about her sexual orientation, and then became tongue-tied, evidenced by some starts and stops, with a bid for support from her teacher and ally (Ms. K.) to get through the awkwardness of trying to publically articulate the significance of the experience of coming out to the people in her life.

This is about me being gay. I'm a lesbian, if you didn't know. It's important to me, but a lot of them get discriminated against and I don't like it.

It shaped me ((stops, pauses)) ((looks at Ms. K.))

I reacted ((stops, pauses again)) ((looks again at Ms. K.))

((groans loudly))

Blah blah blah blah ((laughs))

It impacted me.

((deep breath))

[Being gay] impacted me in a negative and positive way. Negative because of discrimination and positive because I like being gay. I like it.

Despite the quickly shifting moods of these statements, and the difficulty of moving smoothly forward with the presentation, there was no doubt that Casey felt accepted enough at school to share her pride in her gay identity, repeating: “I like it.” As noted, Casey was emotionally expressive during class, regardless of the topic of conversation, or the kinds of texts or projects she was working on. She appeared to take pleasure in her emotionality, both the despair and the delight, and these two qualities often emerged at the same time. At the time of her haiku project, Casey expressed more delight than despair in resisting heteronormative expectations; saying “I like it,” and “I am who I am,” illustrating a display of “affective ... resistance” (Bae & Ivashkevich, 2012, p. 5) in the face of discrimination. In writing and speech, Casey performed an affective resistance to the cultural norm that says that middle school girls should look, act, and be straight, and somehow convey apologies for being gay.

Such strength stands in contrast to an earlier demonstration of affective resistance, from a poem Casey had written the previous year, titled “Looking Forward.” She brought up this poem during an interview as something I could or should read. I interpreted her interest in sharing it with me as a sign that the text had been in some way significant to her, as an expression of herself, and as an accomplishment (“it’s *really* long”). The 880-

word free verse poem contains the word “want” 65 times. It’s hard to ignore the sense of plaintive desire, an incantation, almost, of want, culminating in the final lines:

I want to be able to smile for real and not fake it.

I want to be in love with myself.

I want more in life then [sic] I've been saying.

In this conclusion, Casey expressed an intense desire to put sorrow in the past and replace it with self-love and joy. This wanting might be read as a conversation with herself, rather than one with her grandma or other family members. Certainly, it isn’t a subtle display of Barthes’ *punctum* or *jouissance*, but it is an unrelenting litany of loss, of yearning, and as such, it appears as an aesthetic experience that was wrenching to write, perhaps, but also satisfying in its raw emotionality.

Casey’s apparent despair in the gap between the present time and what she wanted for herself right now, as well as in some misty future, was also evident in her coming out presentation, but in the later project the tension was managed; it was under her artistic control. For instance, in the visual lay-out of the haiku series, she chose to place words like “shun,” “shame,” “frozen,” “scared” in less powerful positions, orbiting around the more intractable statement at the center: “I am who I am.”

She set up a similar juxtaposition of anguish and stubborn refusal in another piece of writing, a story/prose poem inspired by Kincaid’s piece, “Girl” (1978), which is an often-anthologized dialogue between mother and daughter that is essentially social and cultural account of how to be a “good” girl, from the mother’s perspective. The mother’s voice in Kincaid’s text covers a lot of ground: rules for housework and admonitions on

how to not be the “slut that you are so bent on becoming.” Casey’s version (printed below) was written as part of an exercise in class in which students were asked to think about the rules that they live with. It likely influenced her coming out project at least somewhat, since both contained remembered speech from her grandma haranguing her against being gay: “This is how you don’t be ‘gay.’”

This is expectation

Appears as written in Casey’s notebook.

You are to listen to what your told;

This is how you listen;

((Margin says
“Grandma”
and points to
text at right))

This is how you don’t listen;

This is how you don’t be “gay”

This is where your going to go if your “gay”

This is how you act if you're a young woman;

This is how you dress as a girl;

I’m not in your love life;

Your going to go to hell;

You're a sinner;

Don’t you believe in god. Yes?

Then obey him;

Gay isn’t okay;

((Margin says
“me” and
points to text
at right))

Why can’t I be gay;

If god don’t love me then why did he make me;

If I'm going to hell;
I'm already there;
I'm happy being gay

As with the haiku series, Casey positioned the pain of “I’m already [in hell]” next to an unyielding “I’m happy being gay.” In other words, she got to write the last word, putting her grandma on the wrong side of this argument, highlighting her illogical adherence to the anti-gay ideology of the church (“if god don’t love me why did he make me”). In repeating her grandmother’s words, Casey created a stark portrait of heteronormative expectations about how to be a girl, specifically, how to be a straight, gender-conforming girl. Rather than “listen[ing] to what your told” and “obey[ing] him,” what Casey tried out, instead, was a script for herself, creating a voiced, and therefore somewhat embodied, rejection of rejection, a girl writing a performance of resistance in the form of love for herself.

Anticipatory discourses

The literacy of desire seems acute for Casey because each of her texts, aside from the ‘zine article, centered quite literally on her own life experiences. She drew on key people and conversations to make her case for gay rights, bringing out illustrative and often painful episodes from the past as springboards toward a better present and future. While she took on the past, and she desired a better present—right now--Casey’s productions were continually oriented to the future; her desire for a future of unshakeable self-love, as well as the love and acceptance she sought from her grandmother and church, eventually gesturing out from herself to include her frustration with

discrimination against all gay people, as voiced in her introduction: “It’s important to me, but a lot of them get discriminated against and I don’t like it.”

This future orientation has been referred to as an “anticipatory discourse,” one that actively engaged in making something happen, calling it into existence (de Saint-George, 2005, expanding on Scollon & Scollon). Aside from the fact that Casey’s poem was literally called “Looking Forward,” the 65 “wants,” may be thought of as an effort to exert a force toward achieving her desire, as if the act of saying or performing a desire might accomplish it. Her haiku series also exhibited this future orientation, although in this case it was clearly linked with the past. Most of the haikus were short autobiographical sketches of things that had already happened in her life, all of which informed an imagined future moment in which adult Casey demonstrated calm, assured support and care for her child. Toward the end of her presentation, Ms. K. suggested that she read that poem out loud. This became a bit fraught, since Casey felt that the haiku, as written, wouldn’t be understandable to anyone else.

Ms. K: Can you read the one about your child?

Casey: No-ho-ho-ho!

Ms. M: That’s my favorite one

Casey: Okay, I said, um, it’s like, I was like role playing as if my child was coming out to me. That like I ask if they.... I don’t know how to read it. It’s weird!

Ms. M: Just read it

Casey: Okay. “Who’s that girl you’re with?”

((hands stretched out, opening in gesture)) I can't read it! I want to describe it.

Ms. K: Just read exactly the words on the page.

Casey: ((turns to read)) “Aye Mom, got a crush on her”

((very quietly, almost inaudible)) “All right. I got ya”

((returning to regular speaking volume)) It doesn't even make sense! You probably don't even know what the fuck it means!

Ms. K: It does make sense. And it's “fudge”

Ms. K. urged Casey to step into this future imagination of herself, perhaps because it offered a view of transformation in how to be a caregiver. Casey explained to the group: “If my kids come out to me, I'm gonna teach them that's it's okay. That they don't have to be scared.” Her words suggest that this might be the kind of unconditional love she desired from her mother and grandmother. While she did receive this assurance from her sister, it's clear that the other rejections were losses that needed redress. In this way, her future orientation holds hands with an orientation to the past, since Casey created an imagined projection in which she got to redo a past experience that had been seemingly botched by key adults in her life.

Through her multimodal productions, Casey's affective performances of resistance built a revised past, a changed present, and a future of acceptance that she wanted (65 times) and sometimes demanded. Over a period of several months, she went back to her topic repeatedly in different ways, in multiple genres (research for the 'zine, poetry and prose) that critiqued the actual, and then rehearsed and performed the

possible. Casey's armed love was protective of herself, but hopeful for different and better realities of acceptance and love.

Alexander's Productions

Figures 11 & 12
Alexander's Topic for T.I.B.



For the *This I Believe* presentations, you will recall from Ynez's story, students had to get up in front of a combined group of 42 students, plus invited school administrators, teachers, and friends. There was a great deal of nervousness about the public speaking event as students took turns in the spotlight illuminating the stage of an

otherwise dark performance space. Further, the teachers actively sought a larger audience for this project, as they did for all projects; students were asked to share their work with family and friends, and with the larger world via email, YouTube, Sound Cloud, and other amplifying platforms. Ms. D. was also the toughest and most consistent audience proxy; she urged, cajoled, and otherwise tried to make students nervous enough (at times) to produce their best work.

Alexander's *This I Believe* speech was called "I Believe in Black Power." His production enacted a discourse of resistance, which he expressed as a powerful self and collective love. Here it is worth remembering that the repetition of Black love and strength is itself a revolutionary act: "Loving black people in a society that is so dependent on hating blackness constitutes a highly rebellious act" (Nash, 2013, p. 3, quoting Collins, 2004). Such self-love was the cornerstone of Alexander's speech:

When you see me with this pick in my hair, you should know that the pick, my pick, is not just there because it doesn't fit in my pocket, which, it doesn't fit in my pocket very well, and it would make a hole in my pants and my mom wouldn't like that, but it says Black love, Black unity. It says self-love because it's about natural Black hair, Black beauty. And the fist is for Black liberation, Black resilience. You know, Black people have been shat on for thousands of years and we are still here, we're still cool.

Alexander's aesthetic projects were expressions of self-love that demonstrated a desire for Black liberation, a demand for it, as an instantiation of Freire's "armed love," using spoken and written words, images, gestures, and recordings. Such resistant texts

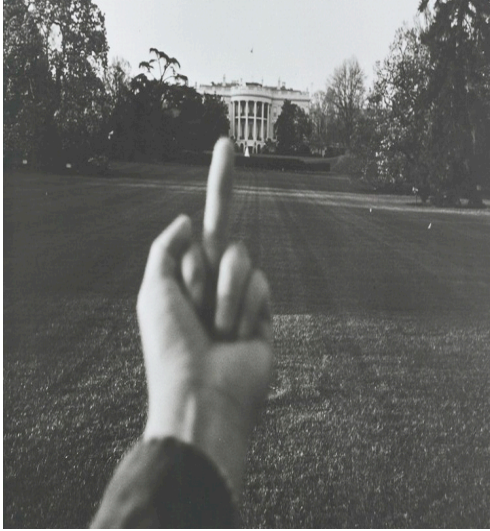
were called for by the course curriculum, which pointedly asked students to disrupt the status quo. As Ms. D. said: “There is something different where you become a creator of media, so you can talk back, you can find your own way to make the world. Not just to consume the world.”

Alexander “talked back” in each photo for his T.I.B. presentation. His images all contained his Black power hair pick, photographed in positions around the neighborhood as if in conversation with local landmarks and symbols. It mediates (Jones & Norris, 2005) between Alexander and his world, quite self-consciously speaking for him from the deep well of the fist’s cultural meaning. The pick might even be read as a literal reference to Freire’s *arms*, a tiny representation of an arm with a Black power fist at the end of it.

Alexander’s photos for the project, he told me, were inspired by photographer Ai Wei Wei’s images of flipping off iconic landmarks such as the Forbidden City, the Eiffel Tower, and the White House. Ai Wei Wei’s resistance at the macro/global level was taken up by Alexander, resisting in his own local contexts. The Black power hair pick appeared in front of the American flag, the police station, his school, a local Central American-themed mural he liked, and a liquor store. Each image engaged in commentary and provoked dialogue. The pick is legible mostly as a NO, a fuck you, to institutions associated with white authority. For instance, rather than saluting the flag with hand on heart, the fist takes up residence in front of the flag, the “B” for Black Power facing it, challenging the state with a *carnival* juxtaposition that brings the “high” flag low. Alexander’s images are both serious and tongue-in-cheek, since the scale of the tiny fist

and the teeth appear huge in the foreground. The flag and the police station become miniaturized in between the fierce teeth of the comb, almost as if put behind bars.

Figures 13 & 14
Photos by Ai WeiWei and Alexander



Ai Wei Wei



Alexander

Non-human “actant”

Significantly, there is an absence of human figures in Alexander’s images, aside from the back of his head. The pick was a non-human actant, a semiotic artifact that stands in for his own body, a fact pointed out by the principal of the school, who joked one day that “Alexander had that hair pick sticking out of his diaper.” The pick was larger than his body, in a way, and extended its boundaries, since it held within it the “meaning stream” (Appadurai, 1996) of the Black Power movement, of resistance to white supremacy. The fist was a nonverbal sign that evoked the multiple meanings of the Black Power movement. Raised in silent protest, it was witness, and warning. When placed in front of non-oppressive structures, such as the Central American mural, the fist

signified solidarity. All of these associations connected the symbol of the fist with the stories of people and actions resisting white supremacy across time and space.

Traversal of time and space

The placement of the pick allowed for multiple meanings as it moved around the city in what Lemke called a *traversal* (2005). Alexander put his hair pick in symbolic spaces (abstract), such as the precinct office, which was most certainly a recognizable local place (specific) (Lemke, 2005, p. 115). Changes in space and place meant that the Alexander along with his symbolic object (semiotic artifact) staged a one-person protest, disrupting representations of power.

Figure 15
Precinct Station



Alexander's images were timely, in the climate of a post-Ferguson Black America, to be sure, but they were also asynchronous dialogues with authority, initiating and documenting a wordless protest. Further, while the demand for justice was happening

right now, in the present, the orientation was for the future. Like Casey, then, Alexander's was a literacy that contained the past, but was steadily reaching toward, and oriented to a different reality, using the juxtaposition of the symbol of resistance to demand a desired yet-to-come social world.

Active resistance

In comparison to the majority of Projects students, Alexander exhibited less anxiety about sharing his *T.I.B.* speech than his peers. Perhaps one reason that Alexander was less nervous about his presentation was that he had been performing on a bigger stage for at least a year, through his participation in political protests at the school and city levels. He had experience as an activist resisting white supremacy through other expressions of Black love/self-love and preservation, leading, for example, a walk-out in the school the previous year over the non-indictment of Darren Wilson, the officer who shot and killed Michael Brown in Ferguson, MO. He was also heavily involved in protests over a recent local police murder of a young black man, at the school, and at the courthouse and police precinct office.

Figure 16
Alexander as Activist



Alexander's activist identity was not limited to resisting the police or other representatives of white authority. He readily engaged in resistance to peers, when he felt it was warranted, noting that he sometimes needed to call out his classmates on statements that were "stupid" on the subject of race. Alexander made a decision to take on conversations about race, especially with white peers, with his customary energy and tension.

Yeah, well, people would stay stupid stuff and I would just read they ass in front of the whole class, and then um, then they saw that I was actually about it, like leaving the school with a couple hundred kids behind me with a megaphone. They were like, "Oh, damn." Yeah, um, I kinda get a rush making white folks uncomfortable, to be honest with you. Like, as an ally to any cause, it is your job to feel uncomfortable, at times. . . . I used to hold my tongue and you know shuck and jive to do my best to make people as comfortable as possible all the time, and to not be the stereotypical angry black guy in the class, but now I just don't care anymore. Um, you know what I mean? As far as comfort goes.

(Interview)

In thinking about Alexander feeling a "rush" from causing discomfort, Barthes' *jouissance* again comes to mind. In contrast to smoothing over the difficulty, he wanted now to go directly toward it, and he felt the awesome support of several hundred students "behind" him. This performance of affective resistance was deeply pleasurable to Alexander, not just satisfying, but stimulating.

Classroom resistance

And while his teachers in this liberal, progressive, diverse city school supported Alexander's political activism and resistance, he also engaged in garden-variety classroom resistance to Ms. D. and Ms. L. Despite the fact that the Projects syllabus and culture actively sought to disrupt the "banking" model in pedagogy and content, Alexander resisted the emancipatory curriculum at many points, while valuing it all the same, possibly enacting an identity as a student who would not be subject to teacher pressure or demands, specifically, not the demands of a white teacher, for, with all due respect for how passionate Ms. D. was about fighting racial inequities, she was still a white woman. I often thought about my whiteness, too, when talking to Alexander, knowing that it was a dynamic of difference that existed between us, no matter how much I might try and smooth its edges.

To continue, as noted, there were many times when Ms. D. expressed frustration, impatience, and anger with students, including Alexander, because of their resistance to timelines, their senioritis, or failure to engage as deeply in inquiry as she desired. Thus, along with many of his peers, Alexander took on cultural identities of resistance to his teacher in episodes of everyday classroom refusals, in the forms of goofing around, making fun of her, engaging in work slow-downs, and checking out. While he exhibited heightened intensity in response to social ills such as racism, or, for instance, violence against women, Alexander's level of engagement was inconsistent, something that rankled Ms. D., because he wielded enough personal power to sway the class with his enthusiasm and passion. That being said, the fact that he was sometimes lighthearted in

his work need not be interpreted as a lack of seriousness about societal problems.

Alexander, urgent and fierce as he sometimes was, also embodied the idea that it wasn't necessary to be "sad in order to be militant" (Sandoval, 2000, p. 165); his force in fighting systems of oppression was but one of his interactional moods.

Emotional engagement with aesthetic texts of resistance

When Alexander was most engaged, it was typically in whole-class discussions about social problems and efforts to address them. During such moments, Alexander's animated voice and sense of purpose fed energy and creative tension into the group. He formulated precise and at times dramatic critiques of his classmates' work, part of the "crit"-style of assessment (Soep, 2006) Ms. D. used when students shared their drafts of podcasts and films. For example, this was part of his response to a rough cut of a film about sex trafficking, broken into segments to show more details of his delivery:

Everyone knows "Elm" Street, everyone knows "Pine" [local street names]

So hearing her [former victim of sex trafficking] say that,

You just go ((pause))

POW ((explosive "p" sound))

You always think it's happening off somewhere else, out there

((quieter)) So, you guys really brought it home ((pause))

Punch to the gut

Alexander's use of "punch to the gut" to describe the effect of the sex trafficking documentary was in keeping with the way he talked when a text or experience meant something to him. For instance, when he looked back on his own projects—*T.I.B.* speech

and photographs, podcast, and film--he described a visceral, embodied connection to the production process and the final compositions, saying they were: "Something I made, with my hands, and I'm not gonna forget that." He went on to imagine the biggest project, the documentary film, as emerging from his body (as in, laying an egg), an exertion that he recalled with intense pleasure:

You gotta crunch it and grind it all out, and then when it's done, you've got this final product, you know, this golden egg, and it feels super good, you feel super good about yourself. (Interview)

The work he produced for this class was emotionally and intellectually significant to him, something that he stated repeatedly in written and oral reflections. His stance as an activist meant that he was increasingly unlikely to quietly accept educational experiences that were devoid of meaning, his challenging of Ms. D. and his peers was a sign of his desire for meaning, a meaning that was inextricably linked to social transformation on a grand scale. In this regard, Alexander might be viewed as an "exile" (Bauman, 2005) in the whitestream institution of public schooling, someone who "refus[ed] to be integrated" and who was willing and even enjoyed taking an "autonomous stand" against systems of oppression (Bauman, 2005, p. 1093).

Implications of Armed Love in the Classroom

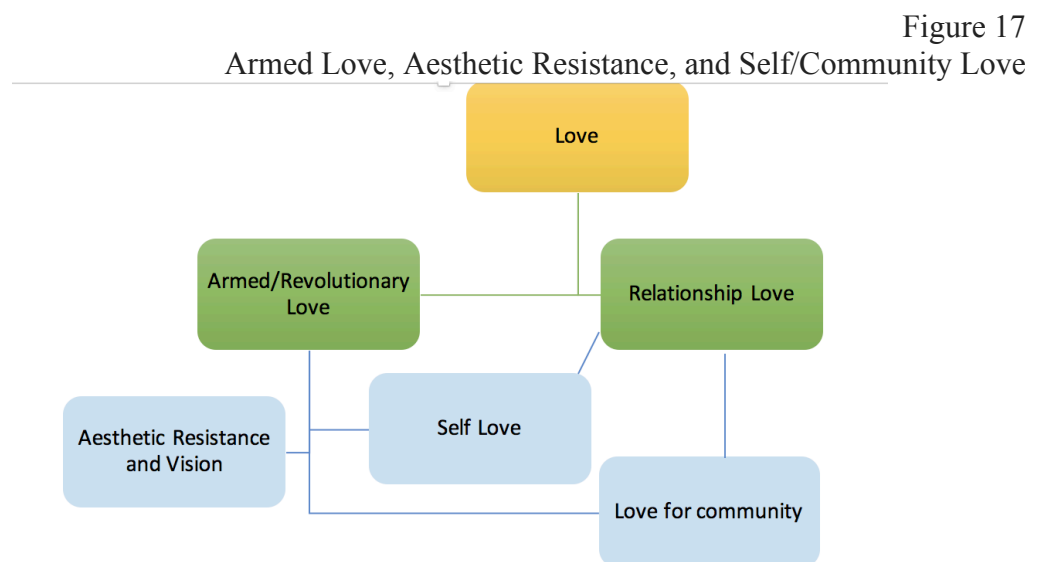
"I'm thinking about my future," said Sonny, grimly. "I think about it all the time." (Baldwin, 1993 [1957], p. 63)

Aesthetic experiences in these classrooms—emotional and critical productions and performances of resistance and self-love--were not accidents. The opportunity to

express a desire for a better future or alternate present in a multimodal composition was a powerful kind of literacy learning in both sites. Students in the middle school seemed to find the most satisfaction in the projects that were directly linked to their own lives; this was evident in the research, writing, and public performance of the ‘zine articles, in the chance to talk back in the “Girl” poem, and, as an extension of these compositions, in the final cultural sharing presentation. The quality of the projects varied, but all demonstrated creativity, expression, and engagement in a larger dialogue about social transformation. Students were asked to produce, revise, and perform what was most certainly describable as emotional and persuasive multimodal work.

Similarly, students in the high school (Projects) class expressed high levels of satisfaction with their photography, speeches, podcasts, and films. They were very clear about the difficulty and the pressure of performance, but all felt that they could, in the end, deliver, and by both qualitative and quantitative metrics, the success rate for the class was almost 100%. Such aesthetic experiences hold enormous potential for identity transformation toward not only “poet-citizens” (Ingalls, 2012) but collaborative, problem-solving, producer-citizens, and possibly, optimistically, “citizen warriors” (Sandoval, 2000), armed with love for themselves, their communities, and the larger social world. And though the construction of complex aesthetic and persuasive texts required significant commitment of time and resources, the data suggests that it was the ambition of the projects that made them powerful for students, many of whom felt the burden of meaning making for a school project for the first time in their 12 years of formal education.

Opportunities to dream and create alternate present realities, and desired possible futures are arguably necessary for survival. In rejecting damaging narratives and structures, and creating equitable ones reminds us that artists have been and continue to be “forerunners” at the front of resistance movements in many struggles for freedom: dissident artists in music, visual arts, and film in the United States are daily responding to police brutality, or inequities in the criminal justice system. Activists use their art to suggest what is to come: “Art is a mode of prediction not found in charts and statistics” (Dewey, 2005, p. 363). Imagination can lead to or even encompass action in a “jolt [that] awakens us from the sleepy world of the status quo” (Allsup, 2003, p. 163) and students who composed aesthetically in this study achieved their goal of advancing democratic values through confronting the status quo, and imagining different social futures, linking them to love as desire (for change), and love for self and community (Figure 17).



The very idea of having something to say implies some imagination; the idea of compelling an audience to listen implies artistry. If art is the “language children speak,” (Delpit, 2015), rather than silencing this language through not listening, talking over, and

focusing on other voices, we must be willing to be persuaded by their desires. For students to know they can be heard, they must have experiences in which they profoundly affect and are affected by others (Spinoza, 2002), shaping an identity that is valued and valuable. Asking students to participate in and produce literacies of resistance at a high level, performing their work with and for an audience, and making this achievable, meaningful, and emotional allows them to act, for the time being, as though they could potentially make a difference, as though they could do so in a forceful and recognizable way, and as though they have a right to create an expressive object, and be “wide awake” in a public dialogue, even if they have previously been excluded from this dialogue. In summary, the literacy of armed love in these classrooms was built of multiple communicative modes, fueled with critical resistance, and performed as love of self and community.

Chapter 6

Pedagogical Love

Perhaps pedagogical love is the most obvious form of love in classroom settings for the straightforward reason that we have grown accustomed to thinking that teachers might “love” their students, or that they just “love” kids in general. And, though it might be an assumption, it’s not strictly necessary. It’s not a requirement for the job, and frankly, it sounds a little sloppy and unprofessional, and, in the sense that it involves a lived relationship, an inevitably uncontrollable relation, I have to agree that it is sloppy. But a practice and intention of love is not only necessary to the profession of teaching, it’s unavoidable.

In my claim that love informs all kinds of classroom moments, from the most intense episodes to the most mundane of habitual doings and sayings, I find myself returning to Britzman’s words—“the human is a creature in love” (2011, p. 11)—over and over. If the human is a creature in love, then the noticeable interaction patterns from the teacher-humans in the study should reveal something about what occurred as a result of their love. In this chapter, I open with a short explanation of methodologies specific to this discussion. The bulk of the chapter is dedicated to representing data that illustrates the two teachers’ most salient expressions and enactments of pedagogical love, followed by a short discussion on some implications of pedagogical love.

Methodology specific to this chapter

My observations and findings about pedagogical love were based on what the teachers said and did in their work with students, in their hours at school, mostly,

although I also drew on interview data, and conversations about specific students, colleagues, and curriculum. I steered clear of such questions as: “Why do you teach?” or the more direct: “What does your teaching have to do with love?” in favor of “Why do you think ____ threw her notebook?” or “Can you talk about how ____ changed over the year?” Believing love to be a component of human interactions, something to contend with either in its presence or absence/withholding, I wanted to understand something about where it emerged in the pedagogical relationship, as a powerful, formative, ever-dynamic encounter that develops and is sustained over time.

The data for this chapter came from the field notes, interviews, and careful review of photos and video recordings of teacher-student interactions to find repetitions that could be described as patterns, and even *genres*, of recurring discursive actions. Drawing on MDA again, I kept in mind how the interaction order in any given episode or genre shaped the action. Were the teachers acting as “singles” or “withs” in any given moment (Goffman, 1983), and how did that influence their ability to, for example, bring about or participate in a desired outcome? As a means of triangulation, I also looked at and coded students’ responses to teachers, both physical and verbal, in conversations and interviews. I located and analyzed several telling events that occurred the classrooms, and considered what they “built in the world” (Gee, 2011). Specifically, I analyzed the actions of these teachers, how they allowed for different relations with and to students, how they made certain ideas and values significant, creating them as social goods that could, potentially, be distributed, and how they made space for the performance of different identities in their respective classrooms.

Cross-Site Interactional Patterns: Middle and High School

Before zooming in on one salient theme from each teacher's practice, I will highlight some of the most prominent patterns observed in both teachers' physical and discursive classroom actions and interactions. By no means were these the only kinds of interactions in play, but they were consistently visible. These everyday patterns--trouble-shooting, side-by-side, rallying the crowd, and playing the fool--help illustrate expressions of pedagogical love, in the form of relationships (nurturing and "level") and in the form of stoking the desire-as-engine.

Trouble-shooting

Discursive action related to problem solving was a constant with both teachers, and was probably the biggest category of instructional interaction. Trouble-shooting—active assistance—is what teachers are generally expected to do, and Ms. D. and Ms. K. remained at the ready, and seldom, if ever, pulled away from a request for help. Such actions demonstrated the broad categories of love in relationship, both nurturing and dialogic, and love as desire, mediating toward something better. It was especially prominent in working through technology difficulties in the Projects class, but was also a dynamic in how the teachers aided students in all manner of dilemmas, both personal and academic difficulties. The teachers brainstormed about topics, worked through a writing strategy, helped shape a thesis, discussed study strategies, held "family meetings" when students weren't getting along, found good books to read, and thought of community experts to interview. Some instances of this included Ms. K.'s attempt to make silent reading (15 minutes every day) less odious, through pitching eight possible books to

Anisa, eventually guiding her to the Bluford High series, which became a favorite, or the time Ms. D. spent 45 minutes trying to figure out what happened to a recorded interview, and fixed what was wrong with Ynez's microphone set-up.

Side-by-side

Both teachers spent time sitting/being beside one student, sometimes two-three, to model a necessary skill, or in order to simply be there while the student worked, in support. Side-by-side interactions were clear when both teacher and student were looking at a screen, or listening to a recording, although all kinds of literacy actions provided opportunities for this relational discourse. Ms. D. made fun of the overused phrase and concept "guide on the side," although she acknowledged that this was what it looked like when she sat with a student in solidarity, rather than domination. Pedagogical love as nonhierarchical emerged in these moments of dialogical talk and work. Instances of side-by-side included a class period when Ms. D. sat next to Ishmael and listened to his podcast, intently focused on his editing (using Garage Band). Doing this, she puzzled along with him, as a fellow traveler in inquiry rather than someone who knew the right approach. Another illustration would be Ms. K. seated next to Indigo, as they took turns reading out loud while Indigo illuminated the book with a flashlight, something she landed upon as pleasurable in that class period, possibly because it helped her to focus. The two didn't remark on the use of the flashlight, but just carried on with the reading.

Rallying the crowd

At the beginning of most class periods there was a brief episode of working or rallying the crowd to position students to learn about or point them to key information

related to the day's learning goal, the timeline, and what was at stake. Rallying set the scene, and then usually ended with a push toward activity; it was intended to get students interested in a topic, project, or process. This is an example of desire working as an engine to mediate or connect the current reality toward something new (new thoughts, new accomplishments). For instance, during the warm-up, Ms. K. frequently took an extreme position in order to provoke students to engage in discussion and writing, such as a big statement like: "It's good for kids to be recruited into the military," called out by Casey: "Ms. K. always saying something dumb to get us talking." At Midtown, Ms. D. showed excerpts from inspiring documentaries (e.g. *Hoop Dreams*, *Bowling for Columbine*), and led students through discussion to critically analyze them and get them revved up about creating their own documentary films.

Playing the fool and joking around

Playing the fool and joking around were interactions and relational positions initiated by students and teachers, alike. Students sometimes made a bid for humor that was not taken up by teacher, and at other points, teachers sought comic relief and would participate even at their own expense. I have said elsewhere that humor serves as a stand-in for expressing connection and love in a "safe" (less exposed) way: a teacher's willingness to be brought low, even briefly, is an act of love, as is the student's pleasure in mocking a teacher, and equally, her/his willingness to be made fun of may be read as a bid for closeness and socially acceptable, not "inappropriate" affection. Joking around builds dialogic, leveling (as in carnival with the authority figure flipped to become a fool) love in relationship. An illustration of this occurred between Ms. D. and Alexander, when

she made fun of Alexander's dancing: "That's your move?" He challenged her to try it, which she did, in order prove how basic it was, which prompted the mockery to come full circle. More generally, Ishmael said: "I talk to Ms. D. as a friend. She's goofy. You can goof around with her." Ms. K. frequently clowning around, allowing herself to be foolish, as when Ayrie stood at the front of the class with her, and silently imitated her movements, completely undermining Ms. K.'s presentation.

In truth, I could dedicate an entire chapter to such moments of connection, support, and pleasure, because they are important and telling. However, in the following section, I will turn my attention to one unusually strong interactional pattern for each teacher, significant because it stood out and did something affectively beyond the norms of the school cultures. These patterns, viewed as practices of love between teacher and student, were "embodied, relational becomings" (Massumi, 2015, p. 50) and they left traces on the landscape of the interrelationship that opened possibilities for transformation and growth. I will explore Ms. D.'s forcefulness and intensity in her interactions with students, and then I will concentrate on Ms. K.'s body/physical position when interacting with students. Both serve as special expressions and practices of pedagogical love.

"We Wish To Be Met": A Call for Passion

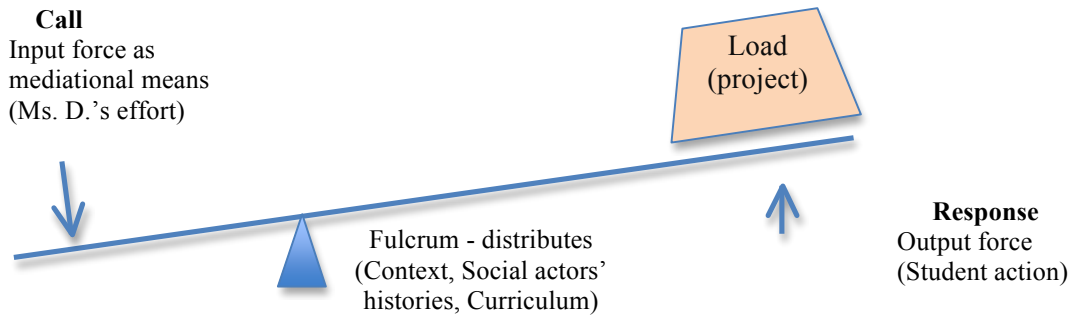
Ms. D.'s pedagogical love frequently appeared as a *desire* mediating toward growth, a movement that could result in a different reality, especially toward a more just social world, as in the revolutionary or armed love of Freire. Her classroom practices and critical literacy curricula consistently sought productions and participation from students

that would question, disrupt, and reclaim/reimagine social inequities such as racial injustice.

Showing up

For Ms. D., “showing up” and “stepping up” was a constant refrain that referred to a level of effort and demonstration of investment that she desired from colleagues and students alike. Following the proposition that “our needs and wants are addresses to the other ... we wish to be met” (Britzman, 2009, Location 1355), Ms. D. had a desire for her others to offer a level of intensity and passion that “met” hers. Ms. D. accepted nothing less from herself, which she brought to the development of meaningful, what she often referred to as “authentic,” curriculum, and the setting and maintenance of high standards. The expectations were enforced through specific, often blunt, feedback. This intensity could be imagined as input force on a lever. Applying energetic “force” to her students--all of whom we must recognize had different histories of participation in school, and different histories within the Projects class (drawing on nexus analysis)--Ms. D. hoped to move them toward greater participation, passionate and urgent, and a high quality of produced compositions. The force may be viewed as a mediational means that Ms. D. used as a “call” to increase her students’ output force (their “response”); the emphasis was on their process, not their final product. And, even if the effort was applied evenly, it was nevertheless responded to, acted upon, and distributed across the group unevenly; some students seemed to soak it up more than others, to draw close to it, and some seemed to shrink from it, or avoid it.

Figure 18
Ms. D.'s Energetic Force Imagined as a Lever



If “experience is a moving force” (Dewey, 1938, p. 38) that teachers are supposed to “direct” without unnecessary impositions, then Ms. D.’s pedagogical practices ran into potential difficulty in that her effort could be viewed as an application of extrinsic motivation, when intrinsic motivation is supposed to be the goal. Further complicating Ms. D. in the role of “lever” is how she might appear to fulfill the trope of a teacher who heroically pushes students to do their best, performing the *Dangerous Minds* cliché of a white, female teacher working miracles in a city school. In fact, while both of these descriptions have a grain of truth here, they don’t tell much about how and why she exerted this force, and how she affected her students through her performance of teaching. I turn to these particulars now.

Ms. D.’s call to action served multiple practical purposes. The Projects class placed value on freedom for students, including freedom of choice in topic selection, freedom to set agendas, and freedom of movement, both inside and outside the school building. Allowing students to create their own plans meant there were constant opportunities to flounder aimlessly, make bad decisions, and fail each other. As a

researcher, watching over the students' "outputs" was sometimes like watching people trudge knee-deep through mud; as a teacher, it required faith that eventually they would get somewhere, as well as a sense of when they might really be stuck and in need of help, in the form of pressure and/or direct intervention in the work.

The students in the class started the year with a discernible whiff of senior slide. They would much rather talk, look at their phones, and eat, preferably all at once, than research topics, write narration, arrange and conduct the interviews, and laboriously edit their complex, multi-tracked digital texts. Especially for the documentary film, a project with a quarter-long timeline, students grew complacent and generous with themselves about the different steps in the production process. It's genuinely difficult to maintain urgency about something that's due in two months, and since the quality of the texts suffered with a compressed production schedule from playing catch-up, Ms. D. considered it part of her work on any given day to generate manageable levels of anxiety.

Complicating the context was the fact that many students signed up for the course because they thought it would be easy. They were taking an elective, yes, but it was a non-AP class that fulfilled required credits for English and Social Studies: the assumption was that there wouldn't be much homework. Furthermore, while the majority of students had deep familiarity with digital consumption, few had any skills with production, and only four out of the 42 students initially noted an interest in becoming photographers, podcasters, or filmmakers. Collectively, the group expressed surprised at how challenging and meaningful the class was.

On the subject of meaning, while some of these students (such as Alexander, from Chapter 5) entered their senior year with a critical consciousness about their political and personal desires, on the whole, they were not necessarily passionate about current local and global problems. Their passion was tested out, deepened, and built over time in layers of social discourse and research. Again, caring was something Ms. D. emphasized as a significant part of their work in creating their projects: “Project your voice like you care about this!” and “Make your audience care about your topic!” Ms. D. desired an emotional commitment about the projects from all of her students, and, by the end of the term, the bulk of the students demonstrated powerful feelings and care in their work, interview data, and self-reflections. However, when students demonstrated a lack of care about their work, it seemed to be experienced as failure for Ms. D.

Ms. D. was able to pull off the emotional input force because she developed strong relationships with her students. As mentioned above, she spent a great deal of time supporting them, helping them with problems, being “with” them, in solidarity, sitting side-by-side to share in the work, and participating regularly in goofing around, to include both being foolish and poking fun of foolishness. Some of her relationships were already in place at the beginning of the semester, because she had taught a handful of them as ninth graders, and they trusted her, which helped anchor connections with the students she didn’t know. In the end, there was a great deal of trust and comfort in the classroom, evidenced in interview data, closing film credits, farewell hugs, and tellingly, the fact that a critical mass of students signed up for another semester-long course with Ms. D. and Ms. L. for the following semester.

In general, students experienced Ms. D.'s pressure-inducing tactics as directness, or honesty; in multiple interviews, students associated this honesty with feeling close or comfortable with Ms. D.:

Bailey I'm closest to [Ms. D.], closest of all teachers at Midtown. She's really supportive, but will call you on your bullshit, especially when I'm being an idiot . . . She holds everyone to a really high standard. She thinks we can do well, like truly believes we can do well. [Ms. D.] can be intense, and you know (..) she doesn't fuck around.

Ishmael I can act like I'm at home with Ms. D. I don't have to act like (...) you can act normal. You can say what's on your mind. She won't have a problem with it. That's the way that she presents herself, too.

Ynez I felt more close to Ms. D. Because at the beginning it was Ms. L., but then it was Ms. D., because I learned that Ms. D. says things as it is while Ms. L. kinda just goes with it. I think I'd rather somebody more that critics (sic) my work instead of someone who just says "Yeah, that's nice."

(Interview transcripts)

Ms. D. used both personal and professional authority to call her students to "show up." What did the pressure or force look like? It took different forms. She paid close attention to what made students excited, asked many follow-up questions about process and product, offered specific and not necessarily gentle feedback. She also performed a kind of blusterous rally, really more of a "mini-rant," frequently enough to consider it a

sort of pedagogical genre. I'm interested in these, because mini-rants stood out as dramatic episodes that carried noticeable affective intensities (Ahmed, 2004; Gregg & Seigworth, 2010; Leander & Rowe, 2006; Thrift, 2004).

When Ms. D. felt that lethargy had settled over her students, she would stand at the front of the room to deliver a passionate speech, accompanied by vigorous movements (diagonal cross-body chopping motion with her hand, or slapping the back of one hand into the other palm) for emphasis. At other points, she directed her concern at a smaller group, as when she attempted to move the "Newcomer Program" film group, comprised of Alexander, Gar, Juan, Abdi, and Felix, who tended to drift for days at a time. In the following excerpt from a conversation, Ms. D. pushed them, describing what might make for a more powerful film. Alexander's response illustrated his confidence in being able to execute on the task, whereas Ms. D. indicated that she wanted more from them:

Ms. D. Make it emotional, make your audience care about your topic. Tell us some stories that draw us in, okay? So that requires extra, extra, EXTRA effort, and not last minute, like ((voiced)) "wait until the last minute" to get it.

Alexander (*drily*) Yeah, we got it. We did it for our podcasts.

Ms. D. Uh-uh ((quick blinking head shake)) They were good, but they were like B's. I want A's. You know? I want you to go that extra step. It takes a lot of effort to make a good story, and that includes your research, it includes good interview questions, good b-roll. And I know

you guys can do it or I wouldn't be pushing you. All of you are extremely bright. You could kill this project, but you have to put effort in it, right?

(Classroom transcript, 2015-12-11)

The words “care” and “extra” and “effort” were punched and repeated to build significance (Gee, 2011); Ms. D. used them dramatically to remind students to make their work meaningful, and to intentionally keep the heat on. As she told me during an interview: “The role I play is the person to be ‘that's not good enough.’” The role she played was an interesting one, in the context of this mostly dialogic class, because while her speeches were performances of teacher-on-fire, using authoritative discourse (Bakhtin, 1981) to spark students, the goal was for more effort, which meant (with the group projects) heteroglossic collaboration, and the creation of deeply heteroglossic texts.

Multiple recorded or observed conversations with students used the words--“not good enough”--to provoke those who were too easily satisfied with their work. On one afternoon, she pressed Gar on his research about the “Newcomer” program for new immigrants, recently established at Midtown. All that was truly audible from the video recording was Ms. D. saying the very words she associated with her “role” in the class. Accompanied with a hand chopping gesture, she asked questions, paused briefly to hear Gar's answer, then responded with: “Not good enough.” The evaluative phrase was repeated through several rounds of questioning, illustrating several things at once: the intensity of Ms. D., her direct push to improve the quality of the effort and the work, and her relationship with Gar, which was fraught (more on this later).

Even with students who weren't in her class, Ms. D. demanded high levels of commitment. When the "End of the Achievement Gap" film group was filming their introduction in Ms. D.'s classroom they brought in some "talent" to help introduce their topic; these students were members of Ishmael's class for African American male students. Ms. D. stood by for several takes, but eventually was unable to resist coaching the scene, stepping in close to the camera person (Ashley) as she filmed a visiting student (Corey) who was speaking in a low-key, semi-stumbling manner: "Come on! Project your voice like you care about this!" Ms. D. instructed Corey (Classroom transcript, 2015-12-14). This episode resulted in the group filming the same section four times, until the speaker finally reached high enough ("good enough") levels of energy. In other words, it was a more powerful segment in the film, thanks to Ms. D.'s demands. During this coaching, her own students—the members of the film crew--laughed nervously, possibly embarrassed by Ms. D.'s intervention. One of them, Ishmael, watched tensely, then abruptly got up, saying: "Damn, Corey!" He paced for a second, and then pulled his shirt up over his face, peeking through the cloth to watch the next take (see Figure 18 below). When I asked him about this moment to find out what he was reacting to, thinking he had been irritated with his teacher, he said he just wanted the visiting student to get it right and it was making him stressed out to watch the repeated flubs and misfires with the narration. Ishmael said he wasn't frustrated with Ms. D. at all, but it seemed to me he was trying to dissipate the tension, and somehow taking in/embodying some of her emotion in that moment. What had been a humdrum mood of "getting it done" turned

into a classroom mini-drama through Ms. D.'s relentlessness; it was as though she charged (electrified) the scene on purpose.

Figure 19
Ms. D. and the Film Crew



(Moving from L-R): Ms. D., Ishmael, with his head covered, Ashley, holding the camera, and two visiting students. All are focused on the third visiting student just outside of the frame.

The idea of “showing up” in this way cost Ms. D. something, in terms of energy. Throughout the semester, she had been travelling on weekends to visit her mom, and missed one or two days of school for some of the doctor’s appointments. I really got the sense that she doubted anyone else would place the demands on students; if she let up on her input force, the outcome would be a relaxing of her expectations.

Love and Force: Rough Magic

At points, the input force of Ms. D. appeared downright harsh. She recognized this, remarking: “It’s real inappropriate sometimes. I snapped yesterday.” “Snapping” occurred especially when she found someone, students or colleagues, to be lacking in their effort. If she felt that there was not enough going on, no buzz in the room, Ms. D. would descend upon a group to interrogate their output, and attempt to get them thinking

and moving. With full acknowledgement that I bring a gendered interpretive lens with me, through years of experience as a female authority figure in classrooms, contending with being read as “harsh” instead of direct, I still found the style of Ms. D.’s talk to be blunt, and intentionally confrontational.

The following transcript from a two-minute speech illustrates Ms. D.’s style. This speech occurred at the stage of the semester when students were sharing the “rough cut” of their documentary films for the purpose of feedback. The students were supposed to have at least five minutes of carefully edited film at this point; some groups were justifiably excited and proud of their work, and some were lagging behind in their production. Before turning down the lights to watch the rough cuts, Ms. D. warned the students that she was not going to hold back on the critique:

<u>Transcript of movements</u>	<u>Transcript of speech</u>
((hands clasped behind back))	If you need to <u>cry</u> , that’s why I told you to bring
((students smile uncomfortably; some look down))	some Kleenex
	I’m <u>not</u> gonna sugar coat it
((Ms. D. moves her gaze across the room while talking))	I’m <u>not</u> gonna pretend with you that good
	enough is good enough
	You’re gonna need to do <u>better</u> than good
((right hand gestures up, as if directing a choir))	enough
 [discussion about the nature of the project]
	<u>No</u> excuses ...

((hand again gestures up))	But, <u>step up</u> (...) this is a project you should feel <u>extremely proud</u> of . . . and in order to do <u>good work</u> , you need to get critical feedback. You need to get <u>pushed</u> to do your <u>best</u> Okay?
((begins circular motion with hand, one rotation of which ends at “same”))	And I’m expecting my colleagues to do the same
((another rotation))	I’m not here to be your <u>friend</u>
((another rotation))	I’m here to <u>push</u> you to do your <u>best</u>

(Classroom transcript, 2016-1-10)

Again Ms. D. built significance (Gee, 2011) about the need for a high quality project, the demand for the best, through use of repeated words, emphasizing the key concepts of “good enough,” “better than good enough,” and “best,” and to underscore the connections between herself (“I’m here”) and what she intends to do (“push”). During this speech, eye contact and nonverbal gestures reinforced the desired outcome by holding each student and sort of binding them together in what might be considered a version of the tough love pep talk, or a revival-style sermon.

What happened as a result of all of the pushing? I offer an assortment of post-production reflections from interviews here, to convey something about how Ms. D.’s efforts affected her students. The first comment came from Alexander, who, as noted in Ch. 5, felt connected to his work, and, like so many of his peers, was proud of what he created.

- Alexander I stayed up all night, into the morning, making the making the podcast, and making the documentary. And I don't have an attention span for schoolwork, at all. I can do like 45 minutes of schoolwork at a time, and I gotta take a break or I have to like do a different piece of schoolwork, but I could sit there and grind out this video all night, and at the end of the video I was like "Damn, I just stayed up all night, and I didn't complain about it all." And I was like "I guess I really have a passion for this." Like, I liked it.
- Edwina It was so hard. But it's honestly the first class I've put this much effort into. Ever.
- Jesslyn Before this, I haven't had my own ideas about something that I care about and feel passionately about.
- Elliot Like, "Hey, I did this. I made this." People are noticing it, arguing about it. It's out there in the world. I'm very ((stops, sounds emotional)). It's the first class that I've been proud about. I don't know.
- Ishmael I'd say I'm more proud of the podcast because when I was done with it, I was done with it. I felt done with it. Like it was a finished product. I feel like it was complete and people could hear it, and it was about me.
- Ynez But I think that, I feel, when I did a documentary? There was something inside of me ((emotional)) that felt very proud of that work. I'm proud of everything that has happened this year. I'm always gonna remember this class.

Bailey I've never experienced picking my own topic, like, what I'm passionate about . . . it was the first project in school and out of school that I've ever worked on for that long and have enjoyed. Like I was really, genuinely enjoying it, was compelled to finish it, I felt like it was something to be proud of, and I wanted to make something to be proud of.

These kinds of responses were consistent patterns from most of the students. And yet, the path to such deep pride and satisfaction, for Ms. D., was not a smooth one. It required a variety of approaches, including engaging in a kind of rough magic that Ms. D. worked (like a pedagogical Prospero), to move her students. This was rather active striving for growth, more active than facilitation and sometimes more risky, since there were opportunities to “misfire” through being so intense.

To see the “relation of becoming” (Massumi, 2015) that the affective display mobilized, it's helpful to picture the encounters in terms of the interaction order (Goffman, 1983) Ms. D. formed as she moved between the larger arena and the social exchange. When Ms. D. attempted to bring the whole class to a fever pitch of desire, she acted as single performer working a crowd. It was affecting (stirring), and effective (it got results). When some groups were engrossed in their projects, but others were stalled out, Ms. D. gathered information about the progress of the stalled group, and often pivoted to ignite them.

As an example, she enacted a smaller-scale version of the large-group performance, with the “Newcomer” group. This group, as noted earlier, had a tendency to take it easy. Their refusal to become as fired up as Ms. D. desired was a low-level form

of resistance to her regime of care and passion about the work. On this day, she watched a rough cut of their documentary, and then discussed next steps with them. My notes indicate that she was angry because they didn't have enough good footage, and that she was trying to give them ideas about how they could make the film better, including trying to broaden their scope beyond the Somali students they interviewed and followed, and interview newcomers from other immigrant populations. In quick succession, Ms. D. asked if Juan could help convince a Latinx newcomer to be interviewed, since he spoke Spanish and was an immigrant himself. She then pivoted to Abdi to find out when he was planning to finish translating an interview from Somali into English. Next, she recommended that they get more lively, animated scenes from the Newcomer classroom to make their film more visually dynamic. The members of the group shot down many, if not most, of her ideas, saying they had tried to interview more students, but that nobody wanted to talk to them, and that the newcomers were mainly Somali immigrants, and not from other countries. They also complained that the Newcomer classes were terribly dull, and they were not able to get lively footage because it was never lively there.

Ms. D My point is, try harder. Get some damn footage of some damn people who are happy to be here. ((Gar and Juan look at each other.)) Find other ways, do other interviews, to make the movie.

Alexander I disagree. Let me tell you, this is what the population of the Newcomer classroom looks like. If you're expecting a rainbow you aren't getting it. It's largely Somali.

Juan There are three Hmong kids in the group, but they're like "no." They

don't want to be interviewed or filmed. There aren't any Latinos, period.

Ms. D. Is your narration done?

Alexander We're doing it tonight at home.

Ms. D. Get it done.

Juan Of course--

Ms. D. --Don't "of course" me

[They begin talking about the Newcomer classroom being depressing.]

Alexander I walked in there. It's gray as hell. Dark, dingy, everybody's sad. So do we want the truth or do we want a good movie? It's not uplifting --

Ms. D. ((shifting tone)) Well, it's true you don't want to misrepresent. Did you ask the district for their take on the program?

Alexander No, the district isn't good to deal with and they'll be like "Oh, the Newcomer program. It's great!" But the teachers and kids aren't into it. They have their heads down.

Ms. D. It affects everyone here [in Midtown]. It seems like you could get more teacher perspective?

[Alexander, Juan, and Ms. D., with Abdi, Felix, and Gar looking on, talked about the artistic, civic, and moral dilemmas entailed in highlighting what appeared to be a program in distress.]

(Transcription and field notes, 1-12-16)

It's important to note that at almost the same moment she was attempting to exert force or pressure on this group, Ms. D. also took in the arguments presented by them, and

brainstormed with them about possible ways of addressing the problems they were encountering.

The forcefulness of Ms. D. stood out because there was an unexpected quality to it. It violated the compact that students often make with their teachers, especially by the time senior year rolls around: ease up/leave us alone and we'll leave you alone, which is supposed to translate to assignments that are not terribly taxing, and accepting "okay" instead of excellent (and sometimes declaring such outcomes to be strong, or even outstanding). There was no such agreement in Projects.

"Otherwise known as being a bitch." When I commented to Ms. D. about her forcefulness with students, she laughed: "Right. Otherwise known as being a bitch." She referred to herself as the "mean dad," in contrast to Ms. L.'s "nice mom." This was stressful, she noted, for a variety of reasons. For one thing, Ms. D.'s strong relationships with students mattered to her, and they were important to her students as well; she was frequently accorded favorite teacher status in my formal and informal conversations with them. This ongoing performance of intensity, sometimes rage, to try and get her students to produce their best work was not surprisingly "exhausting" for her. She worried about "coming down" too hard on her students, saying: "You have to kind of like, 'Okay, let me not be harsh.'" It seemed that the rage was part of her duty, and Ms. D. did not really attempt to discipline it from "spilling out" (Thiel, 2016, p. 97), because she used it to get what *she* desired out of her students (passion, criticality, productivity), and what she wanted to convince them to desire for themselves, ultimately.

Failing to show up. Did her tactics drive a wedge between herself and her students? Certainly, at times they must have done so at least a bit, especially if she misjudged a student's intentions. For example, Ms. D. was an incredibly patient person, despite her brisk manner, but she appeared to have little to no patience with Gar in contrast to almost any other student in the class, sometimes leaving me to wonder what he could possibly have done to annoy her so. She said later that she thought he was pretending to be "ditzzy" and not know what was going on, but he was "fucking with me. Like that kid was fucking with me." I countered that I didn't think he was that calculated, but Ms. D. remained skeptical.

Gar was frequently off task, it's true. He spent precious class time doing things like spinning a pencil, or flipping a water bottle, once losing control of his water bottle six times during a single class period, reaching for it ineffectually as it rolled on the floor. On the other hand, he was gentle and kind with his girlfriend Raine, a Projects student who was dealing with multiple stressors in her life: substance abuse, an eating disorder, and the aftermath of a sexual assault. My point is that Gar was as complex as any other kid in the class, but somehow Ms. D. viewed him as intentionally shallow. He wasn't passionate, he wasn't quick, and, as a white middle class male, he wasn't noticeably disadvantaged materially, socially, or culturally.

A psychoanalytic reading of this would be that he wasn't someone Ms. D. could see herself in; he didn't reflect back anything recognizable or desirable to her. The theory goes that parents/teachers desire to see themselves in their children/students, either students who remind them of themselves, or students who clearly "need" them and

therefore bring out their best teaching selves. Students who fail to do this are frustrating and even incur flashes of rage. Gar didn't demonstrate passion for a topic. His contribution to the Newcomers team was to tend to the equipment, making sure the camera was charged, and so forth. He didn't come up with new ideas, or suggest solutions to their problems, and he didn't seem terribly worried about their deadlines. It's certainly conceivable that Gar was intentionally refusing to demonstrate obedience to Ms. D.'s authority, even if he was extremely milk-toast about his resistance: it was his very lack of pulse that incited Ms. D.'s anger. Her performance of "combustibility" ("not good enough") became more pronounced in his presence (Britzman, 2011, p. 86), but it still didn't create tension in Gar, it didn't ignite him, and he never "showed up" in the way Ms. D. desired by becoming a voice for change. The demand to conform in a critical classroom is, after all, a demand for a certain type of performance (Ellsworth, 1989; Fisher, 2001), one that Gar appeared oblivious to.

Ms. D. was transparent about feeling responsible for her students' intellectual growth and performance in her class. In calling or hailing her students to respond with *more*, she often felt alone with this burden, even with a co-teacher in the room. "Would things get done at the level they do if I just let it roll? I have to push them hard so that they will be proud of themselves. But do I enjoy the role I play? It's stressful."

Showing up, in the end, was what was most important to Ms. D. When Hani's group lost their camera, Ms. D. was more upset that they didn't come to tell her about it for ten days than she was about the lost equipment (which, thankfully, was eventually found). What she said surprised and moved Hani: "We have a relationship that's bigger

than this. Bigger than one mistake.” That they finally “showed up” to work through the problem and complete their film was the important thing. To show up was a demand that Ms. D. placed on the people in her life, and she demanded it even more of herself. It was how Ms. D. demonstrated competence in her job, yes, but it also was her lived commitment to students, to learning. And, in moments both sublime and difficult, showing up was Ms. D.’s love in action.

Inclusive Love

Across town, at Critical Academy middle school, entirely different actions and interactions signaled Ms. K.’s pedagogical love. And, while many of these overlapped with Ms. D.’s ways (as noted above), I zeroed in on how Ms. K. placed herself next to and with students that communicated inclusion, an inclusive love. Ms. K. offered what appeared to be an unconditional acceptance of her students, a stance that seems very in keeping with Noddings’ “ethic of care” (2013), with Ms. K. performing the role of “one caring” and students positioned as “ones cared for.” At times, I also noticed instances of the nurturing love discussed in hooks (1994), a suggestion of teacher as the provider of a sort of love feast: “Why do you think there is not enough love or care to go around?” (hooks, 1994) in a classroom that functioned as a boundless love economy. Her manner was warm, and she was almost always positive in the way she talked to them and about them, conveying that she attributed the “best possible motive consistent with reality” (Noddings, 2013, location 242) to their actions. She had a knack for ignoring irritating behaviors, although she spoke energetically to the whole class or smaller groups to ask how they could create a more “scholarly” feeling in the room, in her version of “rallying

the crowd.” At times, Ms. K.’s interactions seemed familiar, in the sense of “family”; she performed relational identities that carried traces of being a mother, or big sister, or eccentric aunt, with these young adolescent students. Casey, as mentioned earlier, referred to Ms. K. as her mom, sometimes storming into the room and demanding: “Where’s my mom?” Ms. K. also maintained close contact with students’ actual families, getting parents and guardians on the phone for a variety of reasons, but hardly ever in the manner of “reporting” on bad behavior. Rather, she seemed able to convey a desire to be in touch, communicating an “attitude of caring” (Noddings, 2013, Location 728) rather than an attitude of charity, or judgment.

Communicative Bodies

Collectively, the students of 5th hour were notable for their unruliness. They were in fairly constant motion, out of their seats so much that the teachers developed new rules for them, strictures on when they could get the bathroom pass (not during whole-class discussion time, not during the last 5 minutes of class, only once during class time), and when they were allowed to sit on the sofas (during Silent Reading on a rotating schedule). The teachers changed the configuration of desks regularly, in hopes of creating a more orderly experience. None of these adjustments really had the desired effect, at least not for long. All the way through the end of the year, students violated the new agreements; they continued to roam, and they continued to swear or exclaim loudly during class. It was a small group, but they had a big presence, and Ms. K., Ms. A., and Ms. M. often talked after class about how to increase focus and output, and how to decrease disruptive behaviors.

Physical closeness. Given the motion of the students, I couldn't help but notice what went on with the bodies in the room. I began tracking their movements almost from the beginning of my time at Critical Academy, and later studied images and video stills to help me make sense of the flurry of activity, to see what I might learn about the relationships and dynamics in the class. One thing that stood out as a clear pattern was Ms. K.'s position, in photo after photo, as beside her students, often in close physical contact with them. She projected a way of "being together with [her students] in the world," willingly grouping herself as "with" them in space, demonstrating through this closeness something readable to both the participants and any others in the room (Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 45). What is meant by "close contact"? The interpersonal distance that one might expect in between teacher and student in a secondary classroom typically ranges between social (4-11 feet) to personal (18 inches - 4 feet) (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). Ms. K. shrank these distances, frequently inhabiting the zone of intimacy with them—anywhere between direct touch and 18 inches--which is usually reserved for "lovemaking and wrestling" according to anthropologist Edward T. Hall (ref. in Scollon & Scollon, 2003, p. 53). To illustrate this proximity, the following eight images show Ms. K. engaged in a variety of activities with students, all of which occurred, or partly occurred, in the intimacy zone. The interactions in the photos can be categorized as side-by-side literacy activities, involving sitting close and standing with students (Figures 20-25) and physical play (Figures 26-27).

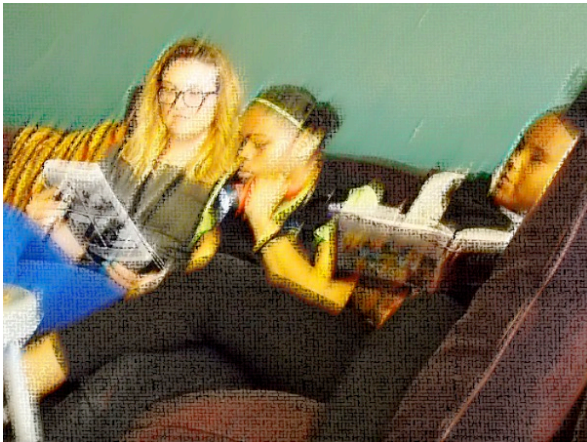


Figure 20

Sitting close on a couch, Indigo and Ms. K. took turns reading while Indigo followed along with a flashlight. Marquita looked on but read her own book separately.

Figure 21

Ms. K. and Yanna went over an assignment while **sitting close together on a couch**

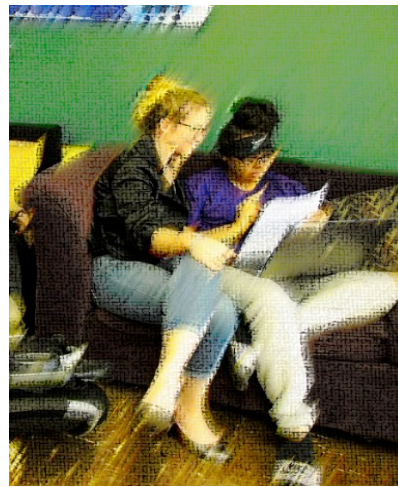


Figure 22

Casey and Ms. K. reviewed a list of assignments **as they sat together on a couch**



Figure 23

Ms. K. took turns reading an article aloud **standing with a small group in a close circle**



Figure 24

Standing with Taylor and Rosa, Ms. K. read a script they had written with Yanna, Ms. K. took Yanna's place to perform because she was absent.

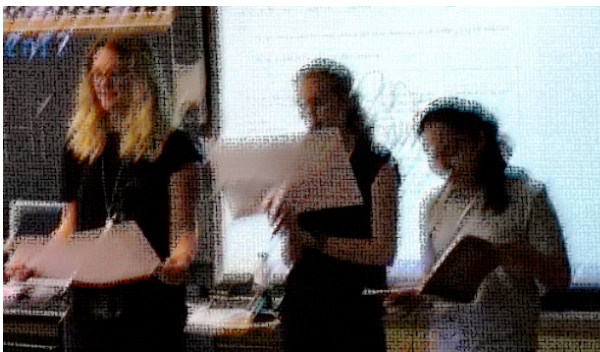


Figure 25

Standing close to Indigo, Ms. K. read something she was writing. Indigo had covered her mouth with tape, and wanted to communicate with Ms. K. This wasn't the first or last time she put tape fully over her mouth. Sometimes she would peel it away to speak. When I asked her why she did it, she said it felt good.

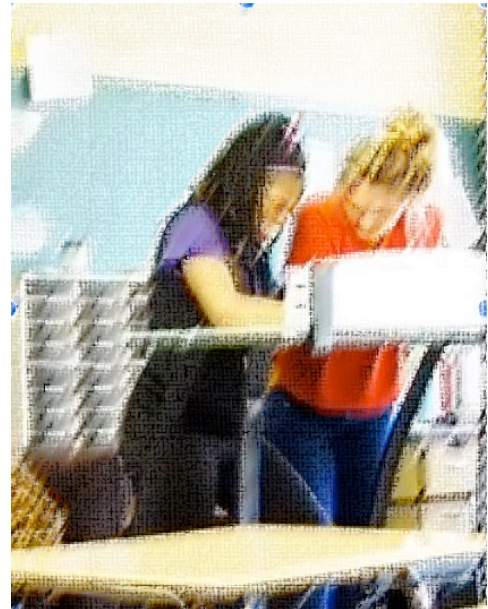


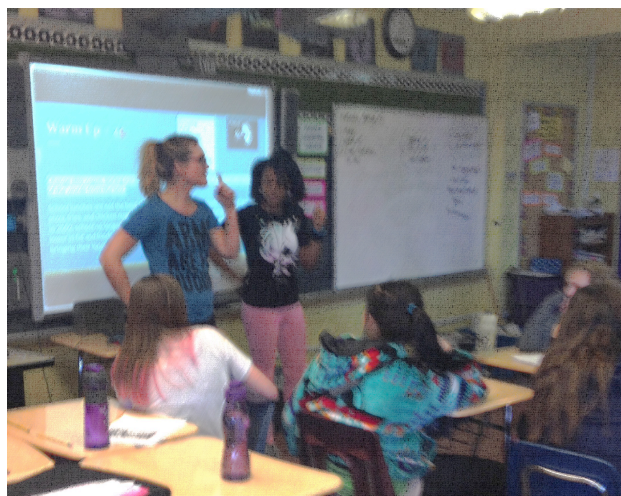


Figure 26

Responding to a Rosa who was pointing at her hand directly in front of Ms. K.'s face, Ms. K. grabbed her hand and swung it gently to stop her from poking at her.

Figure 27

Ayrie got up in front of the class in order to mimic all of Ms. K.'s gestures, spending roughly 5 minutes engaged in outright mockery. Ms. K. simply continued presenting material, **standing a bit closer to Ayrie** without referring in any way to the imitation game



In the first six images, Ms. K. entered her students' space, often by verbal invitation ("Sit here, Ms. K.") but sometimes by plunking herself in their midst. In images 26 and 27, students made the initial physical approach to Ms. K., and her response was akin to a jump-roper finding the rhythm of a twirling rope. There was no disruption to the activity: after being pointed at and prodded, she grabbed onto Rosa's hand, and after Ayrie made her the butt of physical humor, Ms. K. carried on with her presentation, even drawing closer to her to make the imitated gestures more obvious.


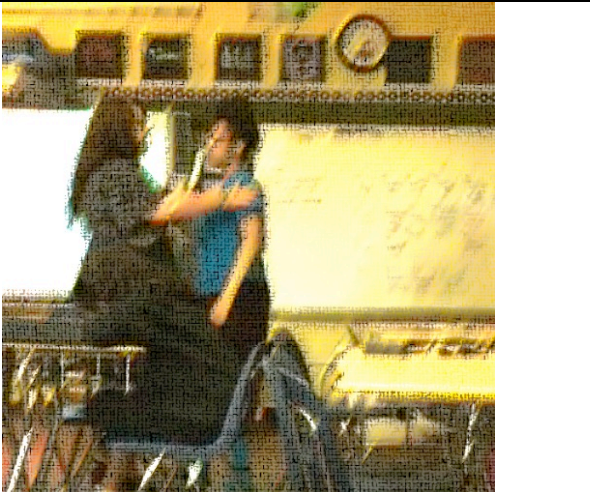
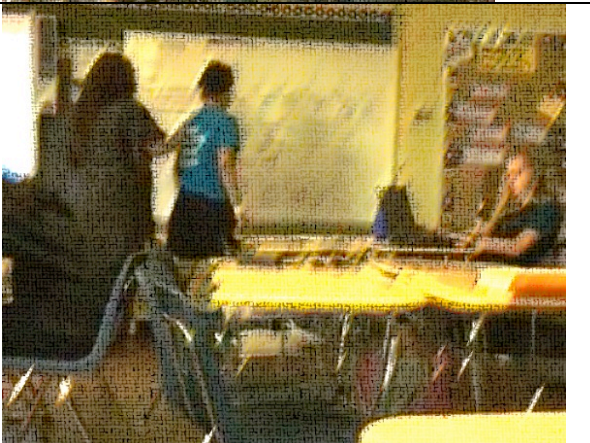
I do not wish to idealize Ms. K.'s relationships with students, but her ability to be physically close to them appeared to function as a means of showing love, care, support, or solidarity, unorthodox though such proximity might be in many middle school classrooms. These connections were complicated by the fact that they weren't uniform in the least. Ms. K. sat near some students, and didn't sit near others. Was this exclusionary, within a generally inclusive classroom culture? Possibly. It may have been how Ms. K. read students' "personal fronts" as to whether or not they wanted to be close to her (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). Or, perhaps Ms. K. was attempting to discipline in a "caring" way those students who typically stood up, walked around, poked others, or called out during quiet moments. It was telling that the students who kept a distance from Ms. K. were the "well-behaved" ones, whose bodies didn't require any containment. Ms. K.'s proximity may have been an elaborate mechanism of control. On the other hand, students seemed to desire having Ms. K. enter their zones of intimacy, requesting her presence through asking her to sit on the couch. Were they making this request less directly, through doing disruptive behaviors?


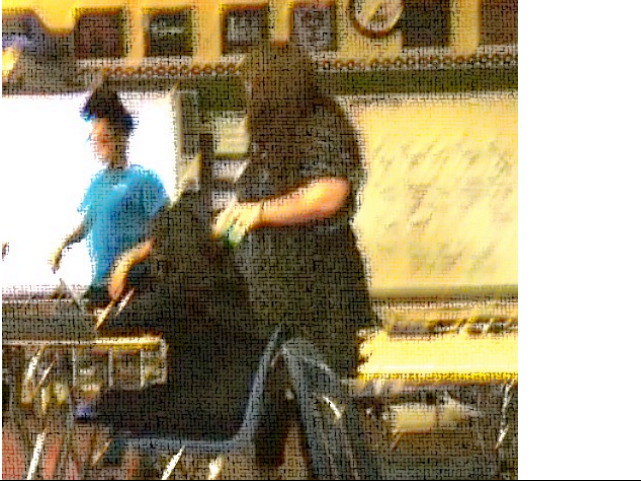
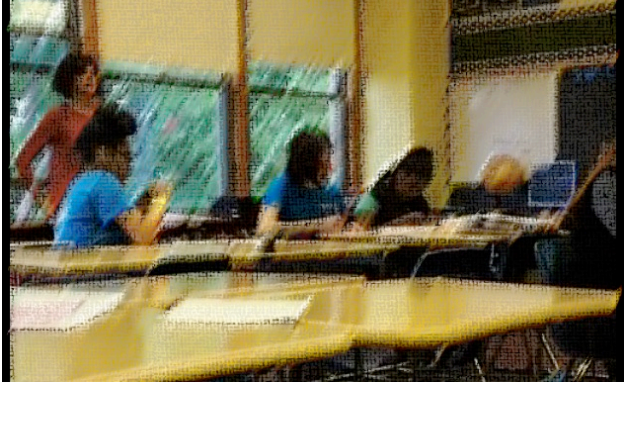
Regardless of the motivation for her proximity to them, a case can be made that Ms. K.'s body served as a mediational means in creating connections with certain students. In this argument, physical closeness functioned as a social good, as a signifier of belonging, which she distributed *as needed* among members of the group. Thus, her practice of doing literacy included not only texts like books, maps, videos, or a game of Kahoot, but also the text of her body communicating a sense of belonging and comfort. If the traditional texts of school were less "legible" or were recognized as less relevant to

some students (those with histories of resistance to and marginalization in school), perhaps Ms. K. intuitively sought to make visible a common starting point with them as co-participants in the (D)iscourse of schooling, highlighting an intersubjectivity that wasn't necessary with students who were already at ease in the conversation.

Dance of Control. As a contrasting case, there were more unsubtle episodes when proximal bodies were used not to foster connection, but to control student behavior. It was particularly interesting to study a video interaction in slow motion to see the moment-to-moment positions between Yanna and Ms. M., the Special Education teacher. However, I want to point out that the actions of Ms. M. here are fully in keeping with classroom management strategies that are viewed as “best practices.” Any teacher might recognize the use of proximity to help monitor and contain a student who has a history of erupting in class. Indeed, the interactions between Yanna and Ms. M. were generally unremarkable and often very positive; I am offering the example of Ms. M. not to wag my finger at her practices, but because she helped me to notice something different in the ways Ms. K. interacted with Yanna.

What Ms. M. attempted to do was “define the situation” (Rowe, 2005) by engaging in what appeared to be (in slow motion) a “dance” of management with her. Ms. M. remained surreally calm throughout the incident, which was only minimally dramatic in the context of this classroom. In efforts to convey the slow-motion effect, I have included six still images from the 90-second sequence (Figures 28-33):

<p>Figure 28</p> <p>Re-entering the room, Yanna (figure on the right) threw a packet of work in the air. Ms. K. (on the left) did not turn to react, and Taylor (the student in between them) didn't register a response, either.</p>	
<p>Figure 29</p> <p>Yanna began circling the clump of desks, and Ms. M. stopped her with a goal of turning her around to get her to retrieve the thrown packet. Yanna asked (full volume) where to put her yellow notebook, which she was holding up. Ms. M., <i>sotto voce</i>, told her to be quieter, and placed her hands on Yanna's shoulders to steer her back toward the door.</p>	
<p>Figure 30</p> <p>Ms. M. continued propelling her, with her hands on her back. Yanna began to laugh loudly.</p>	

<p>Figure 31</p> <p>Yanna picked up the papers and put them in a caddy, and then turned to find Ms. M. standing close. When she reacted to her proximity by vocalizing at a louder level, Ms. M. urged her to be quiet (hands outstretched).</p>	
<p>Figure 32</p> <p>Yanna moved past Ms. M. flapping her yellow notebook, standing for a moment to wave it in Casey's face, before tossing the notebook into a recycling bin. Ms. M. stood several feet away, but was still watching Yanna.</p>	
<p>Figure 33</p> <p>Yanna sat at her desk, without packet and without notebook. She seemed to be paying attention to her hand. Ms. A. (standing by the window) was now watching her, but she did not approach any closer than this, nor did she respond when Yanna said (loudly): "Why is this class so boring?"</p>	

Turning to Yanna's moves, rather than Ms. M.'s, I will stress again that Ms. M. is not the focus of this incident, nor is her pedagogy under attack. I explore these moments

with interest because they have a familiar quality to them, of a teacher striving to manage a student's volatility, often nonverbally. But what of Yanna's intentions? We might try to reason something about Yanna's personal "front" in this episode, that is, what she was "giving off," in her external display (Scollon & Scollon, 2003). For one thing, she wanted to be noticed when she entered the room, because she threw the packet of papers into the air, and then, once she had done what Ms. M. wanted with the papers, she began flapping the yellow notebook around, at one point flapping it close to another student's face. She was giving off a sense of irritation, a public expression about not wanting to play school. When I asked her later what was going on at that time, she said she had been mad about the fact that she thought she was missing assignments from her notebook, but she was a bit vague on the details. It's not surprising that when she thought she had failed in some way, she responded with a vigorous rejection of the class. I think the key here was that she was, indeed, angry, and that Ms. M. read the display correctly, and wanted to minimize the disruption to the rest of the students, most of whom were quietly working, so she used the tactic that is often advised: proximity as discipline. In slow motion, Ms. M.'s proximity to Yanna appears simultaneously nervous and menacing. Faced with this effort to control her through bodily placement, touch, and speech, Yanna's laughter can certainly be viewed as a form of resistance to the situation as she bent to pick up the dropped papers.

In contrast, Ms. K.'s actions during this "dance" were quite detached. She didn't interact with Yanna, even though she walked past her twice. One possible reading of this lack of engagement was that Ms. K. got close when she thought students wanted her near,

and she stayed comfortably, rather than energetically, aloof when students gave off a signal about not wanting contact (especially not wanting any form of surveillance). That, too, was a kind of classroom dance. Was Ms. K. playing good cop (or nice mom) to Ms. M.'s bad cop (mean dad)? Possibly, although I would argue that, Ms. M. was worried about managing Yanna's *behavior*, not her *effort*, amounting to a demand for a student to hold something *in*, to refrain from action. [As a point of contrast, Ms. D. called for students to send something *out*, to act. This is a significant difference, pedagogically, to send out a call to action, rather than a call for inaction.]

Comfort and Magic

It's also important to consider Yanna's history with schooling, in addition to her history within this Language Arts-Social Studies class, to help situate the previous episode as a nexus of practice. Yanna, as a social actor, had lots of experience with teachers marking her school performance as unmanageable, or somehow inappropriate. She had recently explored the larger social context informing her personal story of school discipline by writing a 'zine article about the topic of disproportionate numbers of African American students being suspended and expelled from school. This was relevant to her because she started getting suspended when she was in third grade: "I used to always get suspended ... the suspensions I used to get were from 5 to 10 days off of school." When I asked what she was suspended for, she replied:

It was, my old school? When I was in elementary school it was terrible. It was mostly all Caucasian kids, and Caucasian staff, and there's about a good 10-12

black kids in the school . . . out of a week we would be seen only once or twice
out of a whole week. (Interview data, 2016)

Clearly, from this response, Yanna named her African American racial identity within the setting of a mostly white school as the reason for her suspensions. When I pressed further, Yanna continued that she was usually suspended for “laughing or being rude or disruptive.” On the whole, Yanna felt like CA was different: “They take the time and ask you what's the matter, and if you need some time to be left alone they will leave you alone, wait for you to come to them and tell them you want to talk, and they'll try to sit down and talk to you before anything happens.” This description helped me think about Ms. K.'s interaction with Yanna on the day she was angry and threw her packet and notebook. Perhaps it was a case of Ms. K. allowing her to “be alone,” instead of attempting to control her body.

Episodes like the one with Ms. M. were not uncommon for Yanna, however, even at the more mellow setting of CA. There were stretches of time when she didn't participate productively in the activities. She was one of the students who took the bathroom pass when she needed a break, and sometimes she had her head down all throughout class, only to return the following period to sit in the empty classroom with Ms. K. and Ms. A. and finish her work. She cared about getting good grades, and had recently begun to appreciate reading, saying:

I like the reading part, because, yeah, I -- I used to didn't like to read and now, it's my 8th grade year and I just started liking to read now . . . I like to read about like

slave books, because, I mean, it's very (...) like, I don't know how to explain it, it just like comforts me a little bit to read about my ancestors back then.

I asked what she thought of the class, overall. Pausing for a long time (12 seconds) to think about it, she finally said softly that it was “magical.” Why was it magical, I wondered? Her answer surprised me. She said: “This is the only class--you don't know what you're [going to do] in there and it's very . . . like you don't know what to expect of them. When you do . . . when you do find out what you're doing in there, it's a lot of fun.” Yanna’s answer, the time it took for her to come to it, and the change in her expression as she thought about the class pushed me to view Ms. K., in concert with Ms. A. and Ms. M. (again, with no desire to judge Ms. M. over-harshly), as enacting something that felt transformative for Yanna.

Yanna’s designation of this class as “magical,” and her linking of magic to “not knowing” what might happen, suggests that she had a desire to encounter the unexpected, in school, in the world, and even within herself. In communicating inclusion for her students, Ms. K. created openings for the unknown to emerge, to welcome what June Jordan called “sacred possibility” (2003, p. 15). This imagination of sacred growth (possibility) reminds me of Garrison’s (2010) notion--by way of Dewey, and then Plato--of eros as a mediating daemon between earthly concerns and the divine. I’m inclined to replace the *divine* or the *sacred* with Yanna’s *magic*, but the sense of the experience as profoundly meaningful, saturated with feeling, and yet hard to pin down, must be retained. For hooks, magic/sacredness was predicated on love: “The presence of love in the classroom ushers in the sacred” (2010, p. 154). In sum, Ms. K. allowed for a kind of

comfort or peace with the unexpected parts of her students, and not only acceptance for them as unknowable, but love. Such pedagogical love was dialogic, nonhierarchical, and level; a radically inclusive love that involved being in the presence of the other and recognizing their unknowability, and allowing those edges of difference to remain, intact, and even sacred (Boldt & Valente, 2014; Greenstein, 2016; Levinas, 1969; Thandeka, 2001).

Pedagogical Love as a Commitment to Freedom

Ms. D. and Ms. K. had many differences in terms of pedagogical style, from the ways they addressed students to their curriculum design. Aside from the material differences of major urban school district vs. small city charter, 12th grade vs. 7th and 8th grade, veteran vs. early career, and aside from likenesses such as gender identity, racial identity, family life outside of school (e.g. no children at home, economic backgrounds), the two teachers held shared desires for freedom and justice for their students and themselves. They sought sweeping change amid the realities of racial, economic, and sexuality inequality; they talked about this with students and worked for it as part of their daily pedagogical actions and visions.

This commitment to freedom emerged differently, not surprisingly, across the two settings. Ms. D. consistently treated students as though they already cared about their worlds through problem-posing projects; in the application of energetic force, she demonstrated a confidence and respect for their capacities and their “will” to do good work, morally and academically. And even as Ms. D. used her energetic urging as a means of social control, it’s quite possible to see this control as Dewey (1938) suggested,

like the rules of a game that are acquiesced to in order for the game to actually be pleasurable. Ms. D.'s students, on the whole, didn't appear to object to the "external imposition" (p. 53) of her demands in the Projects class (in Dewey's analogy, the "game"), and instead seemed to experience the overall balance between freedom and social control as fair, powerful, and necessarily complicated. On a more practical level, Ms. D.'s commitment to freedom was also evident in how seriously she took her students' interests and desires with regard to topics, project composition, social interactions, and the configurations of groups. The time spent making decisions about how and what to do for all three summative projects took up days, and even weeks, of the semester.

Ms. K. held similar commitments to student choice and input. She seemed, in my observation, mightily determined to find just the right book for her students, with special attention to the students typically referred to as "reluctant readers." As mentioned earlier, when a student was ready for a new book during Silent Reading, Ms. K. became like a shoe salesperson at Nordstrom's, hauling out book after book, situating it within a genre, explaining why the student might enjoy it, and warning about any potential drawbacks. This concern for student input carried into the Language Arts-Social Studies global studies curriculum, too, as when Ms. K. considered jettisoning an entire unit because her 5th hour wasn't engaged in an assignment or text. Sometimes, when she asked me for advice, I found myself counseling her to stick with the book they were already halfway through, or to maintain the original intent of a research project, conservatively advocating she "stay the course." I noted, somewhat to my chagrin, that I was more worried about

consistency in the curriculum, and less occupied with freedom. Another physical demonstration of Ms. K.'s efforts to meet her students was the fluctuation of the room layout, especially for 5th period. One day the desks were in rows, the next they were in double-row stripes, then four-desk pods, then a circle, or a fishbowl, or, on one confusing day, a theater in the round (really a rectangle), with two presentation stages facing outward, in two directions, Janus-style. I recognized in these room configurations a desperate impulse, alongside the commitment to student choice, to control behavior through the firm nonverbal means of furniture.

I may have just put a serious dent in my claim that both Ms. D. and Ms. K. wanted freedom for their students. But the argument stands, because despite assorted instances of exerting social control, both of these teachers accepted resistance in their interactions with students, and both courted critical and resistant projects in their students' work. Resistance implies a "constant vigilance against normalization" (Gunzenhauser, 2007, p. 29). Critique is thus a crucial condition of freedom, and, as Greene pointed out, freedom and critique are as necessary for teachers as for students, if we hope teachers will support and cultivate students' actions (Greene, 1988). In Freire's words, teachers' work with students "must generate ... acts of freedom" (1996, p. 71).

In these classrooms, I would suggest that the teachers acted with love and authority to continually honor the mystery of their students and the larger world (Von Wright, 2009), effectively engendering feelings of belonging in tandem with curiosity and passion. For teachers to desire critical resistance, and to engage in it themselves, they must be willing not only to face, but to welcome, the sometimes shattering surprise that

students are “wholly other,” and that their resistance might be against the teacher, and certainly against school. Such an orientation paves a road beyond solidarity toward radical inclusion, and love. Here I return to the cosmopolitan concept of unconditional hospitality that suggests there is something precious and infinite in the unpredictability of meeting the other, in this ethic of welcome. And furthermore, hospitality could be exactly what teachers can offer in everyday moments, since it contains as its germ the construction of the other as visitor, as stranger, and the one welcoming as possessing the home. Because there is a built-in power difference between teachers and students, no matter how intentionally level and non-oppressive their relation. To counter the constraint of the hierarchy of the classroom, the teacher simultaneously dares to see the student-visitor as sacred, a mystery, infinite. Radical inclusion, or welcoming the unknowable other with a commitment to their freedom, involves risk. Real failure is possible with pedagogical love, but if allowed for, the unscripted human connection within a learning situation may be transformative.

Chapter 7

Conclusion: Love and Freedom

The two ways of theorizing love that I have dwelled on most—love in relationship and love as desire, manifested in connections and creations (aesthetic resistance)--are somewhat less separable than I originally imagined. Love is expressed through actions and interactions, emerging out of multiple and changing relationships of care for, attraction to, belief in, and fascination with others (known and unknown). It is expressed as a loving relationship with the self, where it becomes evident in the form of desire for new expressions and identities, and for creative ways of meeting and resisting old oppressions that are experienced as new or at least sharp each time they surface. The drive to connect and the drive to create often overlap and coexist: we make things *for* others, including ourselves. For this reason, a lack of care and curiosity in school is often coupled with a deadening of interest and output: if there is no audience, no beloved (self included), then why create anything? Acts that demonstrate care--either for a person or a project—"bestow" value upon it (Garrison, 2010), and a lack of care is profoundly insulting. The absence of love or desire makes itself felt; it hurts a bit, like a phantom limb. Thus, consistent and repeated experiences with teachers, staff, and students bestowing value on all who participate in school are necessary and propelling, not because this plurality of participants doubts their own worth, but because we, all of us, "wish to be met" (Britzman, 2009, location 1354) by others who reflect and refract our value back to us, and outward to our others.

In this study, I found instantiations of almost every type of love discussed in the genealogy in Chapter 2, actions that demonstrated the desire to belong, to be close, to be seen, to be understood, to fight back, to be multiple, to have space, to be pushed, and to be free (from discrimination, from judgment, from constraints). I also observed the desire to control and manage, and the desire/demand for conformity in a range of identities, often in conflict and often simultaneous. Both students and teachers desired, at points, performances of whiteness, Blackness, activism, insouciance, and friendship, among other identities. They were pressed from different parties to demonstrate a desired identity as good student, good teacher, good Muslim, good feminist, legible twelfth grader, attractive young woman, masculine-enough young man, and so forth. The data points that I described in the previous chapters illustrated only a small sliver of what went on in these classrooms, which were such dynamic crossroads, and so filled with wants and rejections that it's a wonder school-specific learning happened at all. But it did happen, and, in its best moments, it was clear that love was present through affective overflows, through powerful literacy creations, and through humble actions based on a sense of what students might need. Love was observable as an action that happened whether or not the social actors were filled with conscious intention. Based on reflections and interview data, it was clear that the most powerful actions of love and desire were highly rewarding and sustaining.

Achievable Love

Acts of love were reflected in the themes of Cosmopolitan Desire (Ch. 4), Armed Love (Ch. 5), and Pedagogical Love (Ch. 6), which emerged in classrooms that had life

in them, where there were spaces for unknown, unpredicted episodes, which included joyful moments, and moments of suffering. There is virtually no way that a scripted curriculum would offer students or teachers anything in the way of love, aside from sending a message that recognition of how we feel—the affective and emotional registration of experience--has no place in school. The themes of each data chapter offer interpretations of the transformative moments that happened in these classrooms.

Meaningful events, things that really mattered to the participants in the spaces I was in, are at once the purpose of schooling, and also the holy grail of it, elusive and often not recognized by the participants in the moment. Experiences that were deeply valued by students and teachers were frequent occurrences in the classrooms in this study, and even though they were sometimes described as “magical,” they were magical in ways that should be achievable (if not precisely replicable).

The Goodness in Connecting Across Difference

I began by asking how students and teachers made meaningful connections with their social others, and what happened as a result. In the development of cosmopolitan desire (Chapter 4), I highlighted the case of Ynez in a fleeting, but overwhelming occurrence of desire to connect with peers who she considered to be very different from her, racially, linguistically, and culturally. Cosmopolitan desire provided one answer to the research question concerning the work that love does, especially for students who have been historically marginalized, made to feel separate, and/or described in sedimented ways in the mass media, and in dominant public discourses (raced, classed, gendered, etc.). Different relationships with peers across difference emerged as a result of

this kind of love/desire for the other, and different futures were enabled in the form of a changed social, academic, and civic trajectory following the episode. The need to think about how to connect with our others is of the utmost importance in this political and historic moment, despite a stubborn and equally compelling desire for ease and comfort, to retreat from others, to avoid potentially dangerous contact and therefore miss the possibility of expanded identities and coalitions.

The theorizing of cosmopolitan desire grew out of observing participants' actions and interactions, including their affective expressions and movements, alongside direct speech. These observations provided some answers to my questions about what love looked like, and how it was visible in learning settings. For the microanalysis of Ynez's performance, I attempted to look closely at actions involving individuals and groups *affecting* each other, and being visibly and audibly *affected* in return. This simple conception was aligned with Spinoza's theory of affect (2002 [1677]), which he laid out as the ability to affect and be affected, and to be somehow changed by the interaction. However, while Spinoza (and many followers) located affect exclusively in the body, it seems problematic, and ultimately unnecessary to insist that no accompanying thought will register the experience in that moment. In other words, if there is such a thing as pure sensation, there is also almost immediate sense making of the affective experience (c.f. Lewis & Tierney, 2013; Micciche, 2004; Wetherell, 2014).

In this episode, I presented love as desire for the other through Ynez's experience of terror and thrill in meeting and being met by "strangers," and her subsequent exhilaration following this encounter. These affective intensities were visibly telegraphed

through copious tears and relieved smiles and laughter. Naming another's affective experience is risky terrain for a researcher, but my observations were supported through interview data and reflective writing with participants. I also acknowledge my own felt bodily experience as a participant in the room, responding to Ynez's tears and the quality of the rest of the audience, listening. My own embodied response (holding my breath, for example) drove my efforts to make "sense" of the intensity. More generally, for the students and teachers in the study, there were clear indications that the collective experiences of cross-cultural "intensified affects" were thresholds into a "stronger sense of embeddedness, a heightened sense of belonging" within both classrooms (Massumi, 2015, p. 11). Patterns of affective intensities in these classrooms commonly involved students risking exposure, through opening one or more windows into the multiplicity of selves in public dialogue and production/performance (Lewis, 2001). The response of vulnerability created excitement, and potentials for transformation.

The Need for Meaningful Literacies

I also sought to understand if there was a relationship between love and aesthetic experiences in classrooms, and what might be learned from aesthetic work, the interactions and collaboration while making it, the performance of this work, and the way it was reflected upon. In Chapter 5, I considered the productions of two students, Casey and Alexander, who composed and performed resistant and aesthetic texts that were expressions of self-love, demonstrating desires to respond to and transform their current situations into imagined, freer futures. On a practical level, the descriptions of their aesthetic discourses of desire--coupling art and resistance in multimodal composition and

performance—made tangible what these critical educators looked for when designing literacy experiences: they wanted students to engage meaningfully, to feel something about their work, to reject and critique what was oppressive in their lives and in the lives of others (locally and globally), and to construct a new view of self and society, a way forward. The teachers cultivated discourses of political resistance, which unfolded concurrent to students' less welcome discourses of resisting authority: their desires for autonomy, or freedom from instruction. These two kinds of resistance rubbed against each other in a familiar classroom dynamic, illustrating the reason that Britzman referred to teaching as an impossible profession (2009). Learning represents a loss (reshuffling or synthesis) when new ideas come into contact with older ideas, beliefs, and identities. Therefore, in the interest of self-preservation, teachers must be resisted. Or, they better offer up something good in exchange for causing discomfort. This goodness might be unconditional love, or it might be new knowledge and the pathway toward it, toward freedom to be and do more in the world. Either way, students reasonably seek a school experience that is powerful enough to be worth the suffering it causes.

When the inherent impossibility of learning and teaching worked (and it often did), the students saw themselves as capable of artistic work, as artists. And, in the spirit of Dewey, Greene, and the New London Group, through production of 'zines and the "Girl" prose poem in Ms. K.'s class, and all projects in Ms. D.'s class, they performed the roles of dissident artists, of activists. They imagined things to be otherwise, and it seemed highly likely that their ideas mattered, to the teachers and to their peers (perhaps not all, but many). Both middle school and high school students were nervous about

performing their texts of desire and resistance, but all of them wanted someone to see/hear their productions. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Keira, in Ms. K.'s class, voiced this tension in sharing her "Girl" poem about being introverted and queer, while feeling pressure to be an outspoken, legible, heterosexual feminist for her mother and for the dominant liberal cultural construction of what it means to be an adolescent girl:

- | | |
|-------|--|
| Keira | That was another assignment where we had to share something about ourselves, so that's very interesting but also very makes you very uncomfortable. Because my teachers are gonna read it and I'm gonna have to present it to the class and so it was (..) um (..) a great artistic and creative way to (...) you know (..) learn about different writing styles and poetry, and you know (..) you have to kind of learn to open up um and that's, I guess the class kinda taught me to open up a little bit cuz we do have a lot of projects where you have a part of yourselves out there . . . |
| Anne | So you shared something? |
| Keira | I shared half of a line |
| Anne | Half of a line? So that's painful a little bit? And you don't have to answer this, but is there a pleasure in it (..) in sharing a little bit? |
| Keira | Yeah, cuz I um I don't really like being around people, but when people give me attention? I'm like, I don't like attention, but also, it makes me feel nice (..) and you know, powerful, but (....) |
| Anne | Right. Cuz you're a good writer |

Keira | Yeah ((smiles))

If the goal is for school literacy experiences to mean something to students, to be connected to their lives, to be carefully crafted, and persuasively and thoughtfully reasoned, then the aesthetic aspect of textual responses and compositions must be fervently sought, supported, and, wisely assessed. For a teacher to demand aesthetic productions from students, and for students to be urged to meet this demand, as Ms. D. and Ms. K. most certainly did, we see Barthes' "great bright dream" of love used to change consciousness, rather than staying at the level of critiquing old systems (2001, p. 60).

Enacting Pedagogical Love

Pedagogical love (Ch. 6) offered further answers to my inquiries about what love looks like (and sounds like) in learning settings. The interactional patterns of the two teachers in this study demonstrated a way of working in and with love, which I endeavored to trace in their relationships with all students, and especially with those who had been historically marginalized in schools, made to feel separate, and/or described in sedimented ways in the mass media, and in dominant public discourses (raced, class, gendered, etc.). In Ms. D.'s case, this was a love that insisted on students seriously bringing their energy and devotion to each project in efforts to disrupt the status quo, in a "creative form of opposition" (Sandoval, 2000, p. 159) to unacceptable but accepted situations. In Ms. K.'s case, it was a love that sat with students who had not thus far felt included in their own educational experiences.

While Chapter 4 stayed close to the student experience and cosmopolitan desire, Ch. 6 concerned patterns of interaction, as well as noticeable intensities that occurred within pedagogical relationships, such as Ms. K.'s enactment of a deep hospitality with her students, which, while never spoken of or even alluded to, was an everyday affective display of comfort. It occurred, too, in Ms. D.'s intense efforts to stoke the interests, passion, and drive in her students at each stage of their projects. Both teachers' relationships with students could be examples of cosmopolitan desire, in that they had interactions that were charged affectively, emotionally, and intellectually (is there a word that captures all of this at once—affect, emotion, “reason”—or must we list them as separate ways?) across social differences such as gender, race, age, and institutional authority. In spaces, and over time, these interactions changed students' relationships with both teachers, and with school qua school.

Love's labor. Among the types of pedagogical love not detailed in Chapter 6 was the non-intense love of just being there, each day. A research study of this kind of love would have to include as data a record of an academic year, a procession of Mondays through Fridays each with lesson plans, names of absent students, of strange things that occurred in class, things to follow up on, and a thousand other items of concern. It is profoundly unflashy, this aspect of the profession, and yet there is a comfort to the repetition. Here we are again. There is humor in it, too, as when one student can be counted on to sharpen his pencil endlessly at just the same moment each day (and other students wait for it, as a drawn-out comic bit). It's not surprising that a family feeling can be established, for better and worse. It reminds me of the often-anthologized poem

“Those Winter Sundays,” beloved by adults, but assigned to youth, who are not nearly as moved by the recognition of a parent’s sacrifice:

Sundays too my father got up early
and put his clothes on in the blueblack cold,
then with cracked hands that ached
from labor in the weekday weather made
banked fires blaze. No one ever thanked him.
....
Speaking indifferently to him,
who had driven out the cold
and polished my good shoes as well.
What did I know, what did I know
of love’s austere and lonely offices?

(Hayden, 1966)

As in Hayden’s poem, humble teaching duties are performed invisibly, often behind the scenes, before, during, and after school, late at night. Even when teachers are observed doing some of these chores, they are not impressive. There is no “wow” factor. For teachers to work out of an intention of love, however imperfect it may be, involves some sacrifice of ego. They aren’t frequently applauded for tending to the “austere and lonely offices” of teaching. Contrary to Guevara’s words, the revolutionary teacher must not only work with and support a desire for the “sacred cause” of freedom. They must also do precisely what Guevara seemed to disdain; they must hourly, moment-to-moment

“descend with small doses of daily affection, to the level where ordinary people put their love into practice” (Guevara, 1965). This isn’t an effort to drum up sympathy for teachers, but rather, an acknowledgement that these are long days and the stakes, as they say, are high. However, there are uncountable rewards, indications of “success” sprinkled throughout most days that help fend off feelings of futility. There is also real pleasure in digging into the work. Ms. D. and Ms. K., while often tired, genuinely enjoyed preparing curriculum that would meet their students, and they also spent time and energy thinking and talking through what was going on and how they could possibly work with and meet particular students (differentiating!), how to support certain small groups, how to address power relations that were proving difficult, within the class as a whole. They noted the successes and complete misses of their work, and wondered about how to move students to care about the word in the world. This devotion is truly the everyday, “ordinary” love of teachers.

Both of these critical educators performed such “rites” of everyday pedagogical love, but I chose their most salient and telling instructional mode to highlight what went beyond this everyday kind of love to see what patterns stood out as unique to each of them. For Ms. D., “showing up” operated as a well-honed craft of revolutionary love with and for her students, and for Ms. K., “getting close” functioned as a relation of “witness” to students that acted as a powerful statement of inclusion.

Grappling with Radical Separateness

Anyone who has taught for a while has probably had a student come back to say some form of belated thanks. I learned x, y, or z with you. Something about your class

was important to me. Sometimes they apologize for being “bad.” I’ve actually had a number of former students come back or message me on Facebook that they were sorry for being such poor spellers. Such poor spellers? No, I tell them. Your spelling did not keep me up at night. Most likely I was awake because I worried about you, your survival. I mean, sure, apologize for filling the toilet in the boy’s bathroom with live crabs from the Chinese grocery around the corner. Apologize for walking across the room to punch another student while everyone else was struggling to read *The Odyssey* out loud. Apologize for asking why I was being a bitch. I suppose the spelling apology is probably a shortcut, a way of saying sorry for hating you, because I sort of didn’t hate you at all, or at least not all the time. And, as Britzman suggested, hate can be an important part of learning. Paraphrasing her explanation, students need to know that they can and do affect their teachers: “In order to develop their own complexities and desires,our students and colleagues [need] to encounter a passionate, complex other” (2009, Kindle Location 1533-1535). In rejecting the teacher, and the education, at some points, while being allowed to also hold onto the paradox of caring for both, Britzman implied that students grow, gaining significant demarcations around themselves as separate from the teacher, and their peers, and allowing room for an expansion of identities.

Here I will return to the personal example of hate and love in Chapter 1, with the student who drew himself shooting me. To date, he hasn’t come back to thank me or apologize, but I would very much like to thank him. Quite a bit of time has passed since he was in 5th grade, and yet I continue to learn powerful lessons about myself and about schooling from his act of opposition. It seems evident that this student felt forced into

production, and that he wanted to make clear his rejection of the demands of school, and the person placing these demands upon him (me). Perhaps his hatred was a response to my own aggression, again drawing on Britzman (2009):

The problem is that at some level it is difficult to tell the difference between love and hate in learning, specifically because involved in any teaching and learning is a certain ruthlessness, an aggression with both the material taught and with our respective uses of it. (Kindle Location 1509-1510)

Perhaps the requirement to take in and manipulate new knowledge and to demonstrate learning resulted in anger about a sense of diminishing selfhood, following the psychoanalytic argument. Perhaps the student desired to be met in his moment of anger, the one before he drew the picture. It's possible that my calm reaction in the face of his complete lack of engagement only thinly masked my "ruthlessness" and "aggression." My pleasant demeanor actually might have been quite unsatisfying for him; he wanted to know he affected me.

The other types of love discussed in this study did not seem to develop for the young man, namely cosmopolitan desire and aesthetic desire. I saw little evidence of relationships across social difference, and when forced into contact, it was not his interactions that were affectively intense, but his avoidance of the contact that was embodied and vigorous. Visibly uncomfortable with his peers, he was industrious in sidestepping relationships across social difference. Although he did talk sometimes, it was generally with one or two other students, and always with people like him: white and male. Cosmopolitanism, as a value, seemed to provoke this student. He registered his

rejection of the ideals of universal hospitality, suggested through my progressive and no doubt insistent critical curriculum, by making racist, sexist, and homophobic comments, delivered under his breath, and, as he got older, spoken defiantly and performed bodily (e.g. saying “How Hitler” in math class).

Finally, this student did not demonstrate a desire for a different and more just future, but guarded against social change. He reliably steered his ship away from critical dialogues that grappled in a middle school way with racial injustice, indigenous genocide, xenophobia and its influence on immigration policy, colonialism’s long reach, to name a few. He simply pulled a Bartleby when dialogue and work was overtly “political” (and yes, I realize that everything in school is political). As noted in Chapter 1, he seemed most comfortable when he was doing something physical, outside of the school grounds. On the annual camping trip he cheerfully did all of the set up and take down chores, and happily (of course) built the fire. Perhaps what he sought, in drawing the shooting picture, was a way of escaping the discomfort of needing to engage *at all* with different ideas and people, preferring things, and places that would allow for the exposure to air, earth, water, and fire.

Another reading of this student’s resistance would probably diagnose him as someone on the autism spectrum, or look to the toxicity of white supremacy, or the toxicity of the norms for hyper-masculinity in videogames and other forms of popular culture as a cause of his anger, and these explanations might be fair. I argue, however, as I did at the outset, that he desired and achieved a “radical separateness” that led him away from love and connection, despite his human need for it.

What is clear from the way this student has haunted me, is that when we talk about marginalized youth, we must also worry about those students who are positioned as beneficiaries of the system of white supremacy. It's easy to say that these are the people who voted for Donald Trump and be done with them, and I'm sure they are, and perhaps he did. How can we do other than produce and reproduce beneficiaries of the system, especially if they reject the civic values of equality and full participation? Is there anything different we can learn from them in their quest for "separateness"? I like to think that if I had understood a bit more about love and desire in classrooms as somehow connected to freedom (a full and *free* interplay, per Dewey), I could have set the stage more successfully for this young man to experience cosmopolitan desire, and to care about the world enough to want to change it instead of adopting an attitude of pure opposition to the ideals of inclusion valued by the adults around him. While there were some successes between us in those years together, he remains a puzzle to me, and serves as Barthes' *punctum*, offering the message that there is much, always, that I do not, and cannot know about my students, despite all of my wondering and careful theorizing. The affective intensity was on my end, as much as his, and I have had to continually imagine how I might meet this individual as "wholly other," sending me back to the drawing board again and again to rethink the borders of radical inclusion and unconditional love.

Why Love Matters: Teaching While White

I am suggesting that love is also present when there are significant problems in classrooms. It is present in its absence. When a student or teacher feels unappreciated, not understood, misread, literally unloved, then love is sent out strangely, as a test. If it is not

reciprocated, it can sting and leave an imprint. Teachers make conditions in order to love their students, demanding conformity, as noted earlier, to their own desires (tough love, inflicted for the “good” of their students), rather than attempting to balance their agendas with students’ desires. At other points, teachers demonstrate warped care/love through being too generous, ultimately patronizing students through the insult of chronic low expectations.

While this was not theorized as a critical whiteness project, it was certainly significant that both teachers were white educators working critically in racially diverse schools where the bulk of the non-white students identified as either Black, African, or African American. In the highly segregated city where this study took place, with its well publicized educational “opportunity gaps,” the racial differences between students and teachers were important. Thus, the problem of white supremacy was and is a constant for these and other white teachers, and if it is not, we are effectively putting the “massacre on the back burner” (Jordan, 1989, p. 141). Ms. D. and Ms. K. continually strove, along with their students, to learn, think, and act in ways that addressed racial injustice and racialized experiences, near and far.

If, as I and Britzman and others argue, love is present, even when it is warping a classroom situation—for instance, in a dynamic informed by white racial narcissism--it is imperative that those working and researching in the field of education think about love in the schooling experiences of racialized, and other minoritized youth (students of color, indigenous students, immigrant students, EL students, mixed race, queer, students with histories of trauma, and intersections of all of these), because these students have been

and continue to be adversely affected by the system of white supremacy, and other, mostly related, systems of domination. As I said earlier, white teachers and white teacher educators must not gloss over the fact that Black feminists (e.g. Collins, 2004; Nash, 2013) and African American educational researchers and theorists (e.g. Duncan, 2002; hooks, 1994, 2003, 2006, 2010; Kirkland, 2017) have repeatedly and explicitly called for white teachers to love Black students. Baldwin's statement that "a child cannot be taught by anyone who despises him" (in Perry & Delpit, 1998, 70), still stands; it is still relevant.

Acts of subtle and pronounced pedagogical racial hatred do occur in classrooms. The painful truth, that there are white teachers who do not, and will not, engage in the work of love with racialized--especially African American--students, must not be excused by other white teachers. To counter this ugliness, beginning and veteran teachers can make a commitment to love in the form of relationships and instruction, and to recognize the worth of that labor in others. Ms. K.'s embodied performance of full inclusion and love illustrated her unspoken coalition with African American students, as well as multiple non-Black students (Casey and others), as situations that called for closeness emerged in the space of the classroom. Ms. D. demonstrated what high expectations for all students might look like, with awareness of, or investment, perhaps, in marginalized students, in the way she addressed racial inequities as subject matter, and in her sustained enactment of culturally relevant, media-rich, heteroglossic and dialogic classroom practices, which I described as "showing up," her pedagogical love. I must hasten to add that in my participant-observer role (that is to say, in my reading of the

situation), I felt none of the cringing that usually occurs for me when I'm in the presence of self-congratulatory white savior teachers. Rather, their pedagogical love was woven into their work, and it would be recognizable to Freire and Noddings (and others) as potentially transformative. Like Freire and Noddings suggested, such love can be learned and practiced. And while it is magical, it isn't magical in the way of Harry Potter, but more like Harry Houdini, someone who learned and practiced his tricks until they looked smooth, and probably felt something like second nature. I would not advocate a sleight of hand or heart, as a recommendation for "best" classroom practices, but it should be encouraging to think that when white teachers begin with an intention of love toward all students, and are especially aware of their students of color, a practice of love can emerge.

Love's Role in Transforming Relations of Power

If it is to do anything to bring about change, and not just make the status quo endurable, love must "rupture" relations of domination, "transit" teachers and students (citizen-subjects, or, as Sandoval would have it, "citizen-warriors") toward social change (Sandoval, 2000, p. 139, 178). There is much work to be done, and educational research must be willing to take on the biggest, most glaring problems and strengths in the everyday lives of teachers and students in order to insist on an expansive view of schooling that honors rather than devalues the plurality of our students, that seeks routes of freedom—in curriculum matters as well as relationships--rather than strictures that tighten and limit the acceptable ways for them to be and act in the world.

Teaching as a Practice of Love

Love is not a disposition. First, an articulation of love as a part of critical pedagogical practice has something to offer teacher education programs. This claim might seem to fly in the face of professionalism for teachers, by introducing love as an action and an approach that is appropriate to think about when embarking on a career as an educator; however, the inclusion of love as part of the job description only underscores the enormity of the work. Again, there is no part of this argument that suggests that “love is enough” or that teachers are grown-ups who just “love kids.” It’s so much larger than these two pat statements. Pedagogical love and the actions that communicate it are necessarily different for everyone, and can’t be reduced to a checklist of strategies, or scored as *effective* or *developing* on a rubric. It would be taxing, but not impossible to represent some of love’s work on a flow chart of contingent moment-to-moment decisions in a classroom. Indeed, while the opportunities for learning and connection in Ms. D. and Ms. K.’s classrooms were orchestrated through their ideological commitments, social locations, habitus, and educational and professional experiences, their work would potentially be more comprehensible to outsiders, and possibly even to themselves, if it were framed through theories of love and freedom. For beginning teachers, talk of love’s role when interpreting the many mystifying experiences that occur during field placements and practice teaching might help students to see what they do not know about schooling and their social others, including students, certainly, but also their cooperating teacher, with generosity.

Cosmopolitan Coalitions

The powerful connection of cosmopolitan desire cannot and will not occur without social others becoming meaningfully entangled, by design. Design for such connections comes at the district level, with the civic question of whether or not the public values integrated schools. It also, as described, comes at the curriculum planning level. If students and teachers are to live in the presence of their others, to know them, they must first become acquainted through closing some of the social distance they have worked so hard to maintain in school classrooms. Despite the pleasure and even exhilaration of connecting across differences, the first meaningful contact typically must happen through some kind of social pressure, as it did through an important class assignment such as the *This I Believe* speech, or, as is often the case, being on athletic team or singing in a choir. Once the pleasure has been registered, there might a willingness to engage again, and students and teachers might draw respectfully closer, bearing in mind the concept of “proper distance.”

Cosmopolitan desire, essentially, an embodied experience of *thrill* in affecting and being affected by the stranger, has the potential to unseat and fight relationships of entrenched power and domination. It is fueled through the jolt of realizing the “unfathomability of human beings” (Bauman & Donskis, 2013, p. 11) and it has the potential to combat indifference, and nurture difference. In recognizing the other as infinite and unknowable, and simultaneously human and vulnerable, teachers and students might be able to meet the other as a beloved mystery. Fascinated, wanting to know more, students and teachers might use this suspended state to connect in a

coalitional relation, an alliance not against, but toward the other, in surprising, specific hospitality and care.

Coda

I count myself as lucky in being able to participate in the classroom life of such excellent critical teachers, who allowed me to watch them in action and interaction with their incredible and wildly unknowable, diverse students. I also feel fortunate in being able to get to know, in a bounded way, these students. I sought to know them on their terms, that is to say, I did not seek their “back stories” from the teachers, but rather wanted to meet them the way they presented themselves to each other, in this particular class period, with these particular peers. These young people were kind enough to talk to me, to let me come close enough to see their “faces” (thinking of Levinas, again). I only hope that in attempting to describe what I saw, heard, and felt in these spaces, that I did not harm them through misinterpreting their actions, or simplifying their identities, experiences, and histories. There’s not an ending to this study, really, because Ms. D. and Ms. K. continue to show up, every day, and, because of who they are—mishmashes of ideologies, desires, histories, identities—they will continue to work with love, exacting, inclusive, and they will continue to make a difference in the lives and futures of their students. We understand quite a bit about what makes schooling experiences meaningful to students, and participating in this, the “bright dream” of making education matter, is sustaining and meaningful for critical educators (although there are certainly other factors). I’m convinced that love, as a social movement fueled by desire for freedom, and as a relation of care and friendship with strangers and self, is actually the “force that

through the green fuse drives the flower” (Thomas); meaning, it has an almost constant role in the everyday occupations and preoccupations of those who find themselves in classrooms. As longtime teacher, researcher, and shameless story-collector, I witnessed love in school as both mystery and “hidden spring of action” (Dewey, 1997 [1938]) or potential, and it has left me ever more curious and hopeful.

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Appendix A

Interview Questions for Focal Students (semi-structured)

1. What do you think about this class? And/or how do you feel about coming to class? Why?
2. How would you describe it to someone who wasn't in it?
3. How does this class compare to your experience in other classes?
4. When do/did you feel most comfortable in this class? Least comfortable? Why?
5. What is your relationship with your teacher(s) in this class?
6. What is your relationship with your peers in this class?
7. Of the different projects that you did in this class, what was the one that you were most proud of and why?
8. How did you share your work with audiences besides your teachers (peers, family, other)? Could you describe how the sharing felt?
9. What was important to you about the projects/work that you did in the class?
10. What did you learn from doing them?
11. What was hardest about the projects?
12. What did you like most? What do you think you'll remember about being in the class (the work you did? the people? a particular event?)?

Appendix B

Interview Questions for Teachers (semi-structured)

1. What do you think about this class? What makes this class stand out, in your mind? How does teaching this class differ from other teaching you've done?
2. How do you feel about being a teacher at this school? What do you like about being a teacher here? What don't you like?
3. What have you noticed about your relationship to your students in this class?
4. Talk about your perception of the relationships among students in this class
5. Of the different projects that your students did in this class, what was the one that you were most happy about/proud of and why? What do you think went very well for them?
6. Did you have goals for your students that you felt they were able to reach? (stated or unstated) In other words, what was important to you in terms of what students learned in this class?
7. What specific things did you find most valuable about the class? What did students seem to find most valuable?
8. Was there a theme in the projects this year, or a zeitgeist of some kind, that you found interesting/different/noticeable?
9. How did your students surprise you this year? Who/what were you worried about?
10. Who changed, and in what ways?
11. What felt frustrating, or disappointing to you in this class?
12. How did you feel about the audiences your students were able to reach? What went well, what effect did it have, etc.?

Appendix C
Focal Students

Midtown High School				
Name (pseudonym)	Role	Demographic information	Key relationships	Snapshot characterizations
Ms. D.	Teacher	White Female 20-year veteran	Co-taught class with Ms. L.	Intense Critical Creative
Absame	Student, 12 th grade	Somali American Observant Muslim Male	Deferential and thoughtful to Ms. D.	Migration story: “How can I start? I don’t even know how to start, man. Coming to America was ... [swallowing] surprising to me.” Outspoken
Alexander	Student, 12 th grade	African American (father from W. Africa; mother from N. Europe) Male	Long-term family friends with the principal Performed music with Felix	Activist Confident
Bailey	Student, 12 th grade	White Female	Close friends with Fiona Took Hani in mid-year	Ultimate Frisbee player Social connector
Edwina	Student, 12 th grade	African American Female	Good friends with Ashley Edwina and Ishmael were cousins	About film group: “We’re still learning how to deal with each other. Oh my goodness, all of us trying to agree and disagree ... but I think arguing is necessary for us ... to make a good movie.”
Elliot	Student, 12 th grade	White Male	No close friends in class; developed friendship with Lloyd	About film: “I’m very [pausing to control emotional display]... It’s the first class that I’ve been proud about. I don’t know.”
Hani	Student, 12 th grade	Somali American Female	Sam Jamilah Suad Ynez Bailey Fiona Claudia	Theme of the hijab moved across her literacy productions for the class: <i>This I Believe</i> speech, podcast, and documentary film
Ishmael	Student, 12 th grade	African American	Close with Ms. D. Worked with Violet on podcast Edwina was his cousin	Motivated by the district office of Black Male Achievement class he was taking. His speech, podcast, and film in the Projects class had connections to this elective.

Jesslyn	Student, 12 th grade	White Ojibwe Female	No close friends in the class	Confident Ojibwe identity featured in her podcast and documentary film topics
Ynez	Student, 12 th grade	Latina (Mexican) American Female	Claudia Hani Ms. D.	Passionate about immigration narratives

Critical Academy Middle School				
Name (pseudonym)	Role	Demographic information	Key relationships	Snapshot characterization
Ms. K.	Teacher	White Female Queer 4 th year	Co-taught class with Ms. A. and Ms. M.	Positive Critical
Anisa	Student, 8 th grade	African American Female	Casey Ms. K.	Friendly/talkative Moves around the room and school building In foster care (and not happy about it)
Ayrie	Student, 7 th grade	African American Female	Dionna Indigo	Playful in class (performs)
Casey	Student, 8 th grade	White Female Queer	Ms. K. (“mom”) Anisa	Writer History of many schools Loud in class
Indigo	Student, 7 th grade	African American Female	Ayrie Dionna	Likes to read out loud Says she doesn’t like school Uses standing desk Puts tape over her mouth
Prachi	Student, 7 th grade	White Female	Taylor	Harry Potter fan LA-Social Studies her favorite class
Rory	Student, 7 th grade	White Latina Female Queer	Keira	Skipped 6 th grade Doesn’t do her work
Keira	Student, 7 th grade	White Female	No close friends in class	Reserved Kahoot identity was Ted Cruz “I um I don't really like being around people, but when people give me attention? I'm like, I don't like attention, but also, it makes me feel nice . . . and you know, powerful.”
Yanna	Student, 8 th grade	African American Female	No close friends in class	History of behavior infractions at other schools and at CA Oldest of 10 kids

Appendix D
Transcription conventions

<u> </u> (underline)	stress, increased volume
<u>CAPS</u>	more volume
...	pauses, within 1-3 seconds
(.....)	significant pauses
(())	nonverbal communication, movements
[]	explanatory asides
<i>italics</i>	comments from researcher